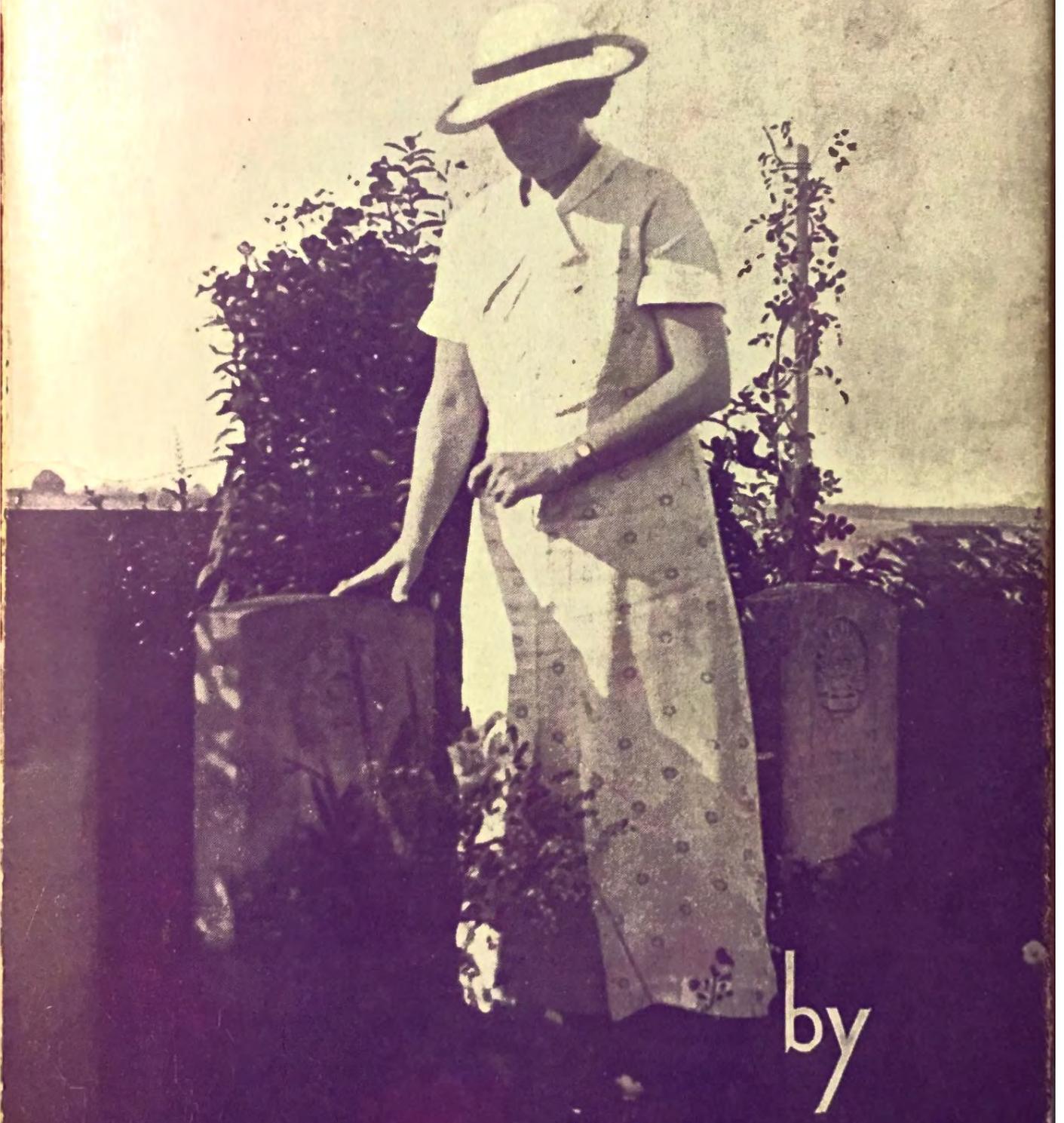


Beyond the Grave



by
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Beyond the Grave;

Or,

WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURES
ABOUT THE INTERMEDIATE
OR FINAL STATE?

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INTRODUCTION.

THAT death is not a terminus, but that there is another state of existence beyond the grave, are beliefs to which the universal conscience of mankind has testified in all ages. The history and religions of mankind, and the burial rites of primitive races revealed by the spade of the Archæologist, all bear witness to this. The Scriptures are very plain throughout: "The spirit shall return unto God, who gave it" (Eccl. 12. 7). "Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt" (Dan. 12. 2). "At thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore" (Psa. 16. 11). "After death the judgment" (Heb. 9. 27).

But not only do the Scriptures bear consistent testimony to a future existence, they testify with equal clearness to its everlasting* character whether at

* This is loosely described as the "immortality of the soul": a term which is based on a misapprehension, as to the meaning of death. If man had been created incapable of death, the Divine warning would have been meaningless: "In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." Man is capable of death by his very constitution, but not of ending his being. He must exist eternally either in harmony with God, which is life, or out of harmony with him, which is death—"the second death."

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home with God, or banished from His presence. This is expressed in terms which are equally applied to God's Being and Glory (See, *e.g.*, Dan. 12. 3; Matt. 25. 46; Rom. 9. 5; Gal. 1. 5; Heb. 9. 12; Jude 13; Rev. 4. 9; 14. 11). Man's beginnings, as described in Genesis, points to the same conclusion. When God created man, He did four things for him which He did for no beast. He formed his body first, then breathed into his nostrils the breath (*n'shamah*, only used of Himself and man) of life, and man became a living soul; thirdly, He made him capable of communion with Himself, as no beast ever was, and lastly, He put him under a moral test. Could such a being be created to perish like the beast? If the Divine afflatus be indestructible in the Creator, how conceive it as destructible in man, created in His image?

If this be true, the question as to what the future life will be becomes one of infinite importance to every man. Especially is this the case if it be realized that the present is always viewed in Scripture as the unique time of probation, on which the eternal state of each depends, "He that believeth (*i.e.* in the gospel) and is baptized shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16. 16), *i.e.* "These shall go away *i.e.* (from the earthly scene) into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life everlasting" (Matt. 25. 46). "In the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be" (Eccl. 11. 3). The most acute minds have feverishly searched the Scriptures to find one clear promise of a future probation for the wicked dead, but without success; they have only two or three ambiguous texts, and made deductions therefrom, but the main drift of the Scriptures

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is against them.* In fact it cannot be shown that men who have wilfully refused to turn to God in this day of grace, would listen better, were a further probation granted. It is only too likely that they would always count on another chance, and yet another. There is nothing except the desire that it might be so to encourage what is called "The Eternal Hope doctrine". Men argue about the heathen to shew that they must have another chance or God would be unrighteous, but it is not they who are going to the heathen with the gospel: They let others do that; they stay at home and find fault with God. We may be sure that God has not left Himself without a witness in any single case, and the reality and sufficiency of such an appeal must not be minimized: "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" and will He not be justified in all His ways, whether of judgment or of grace? Why, moreover, if anything could possibly be done, should He wait for a future Eternity to pass, if we may say

* Two verses are sometimes quoted to prove what is called "the second chance," both in Peter's first epistle, chaps. 3. 19, 20 and 4. 6.

Whatever the first-named passage may mean, it cannot be, in any case, interpreted with any justice as anything but a proclamation or heralding to certain spirits in prison of what we are not told, with what object we are not told, with what effect we are not told. There is no reason why such an event as the death of the Son of God should not be made known in the nether world, or are they to be kept forever in ignorance of same. Certainly such proclamations may be thus made to those who have died in their sins; but between this and the offer of a second chance there is a wide difference.

As for the second verse. "For this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead." I remember Dr. Handley Moule telling his students that as a matter of translation there was nothing in the Greek to show that the gospel was preached to the persons referred after they died, though they were dead when Peter wrote.

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so, before doing it, and keep the lost waiting in "Eternal hope"? Indeed the two ideas of "Eternal" and "hope" are incompatible. Such a hope is a hope that maketh *ashamed*. In reality the dogma of "Eternal hope" was invented, not for the heathen at all, but for the so-called Christian world in the homelands, where the gospel can be heard, and the Scriptures procured at a minimum of pains and cost, and where men, if they ever do go to the place of the lost, have to "trample under foot the Son of God, count the blood of the covenant . . . an unholy thing, and do despite unto the Spirit of Grace". Nor is it for us to profess to scan the pages of the Book of life, or take for granted that the number of the lost will exceed the saved, nor indeed to pass sentence on any: God is the Judge and He alone.

It is true that the Lord, addressing the feeble remnant of His day, called them, A "Little Flock", but when asked later, "Are there few that be saved?", He did not reply in the affirmative, but only urged His hearers to strive to enter in at the strait gate, as it would be too late when once the door was shut! When He was about to depart out of this world unto the Father, He promised His disciples to send the Holy Spirit, at whose advent they would be enabled to do even greater things than He Himself had done. Accordingly, Peter, on the day of Pentecost, in his one brief sermon, led six times as many souls to Christ, as had been drawn to Him during his whole earthly ministry, and at the close of the Acts we read of tens of thousands (Greek, myriads) of Jews who believed. We can form little idea of the number of Israel who were saved down the ages before Christ, nor of the immense aggregate gathered out from Jew and Gentile during the present dispensation to form the church; nor yet of that great multitude, which no man can number, of those who will be saved after the church has gone, "of all nations and

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kindreds, and peoples and tongues" (Rev. 7. 9).

Who, moreover, can estimate the millions who will be eternally saved during the long years of the Millennial Reign of peace and glory? If we make allowances for all who have died before the age of responsibility (calculated as at least half of the whole total of the human race), and who we believe we have Scriptural authority for holding will be saved without knowing it, on the ground of the Atonement of Christ, as they were lost without knowing of it by the fall of Adam, we may well comfort ourselves with the thought that our Lord will have pre-eminence as in all else, in the numbers of those saved, as compared with the lost.

We propose to consider this subject under the following headings: The Intermediate State—Its true character, Its denial, Its travesty, The Millennial Reign and the Everlasting Kingdom. The Future State of the Saved, and of the Unsaved, and close with a consideration of the doctrines of Universalism and Conditionalism.

CHAPTER I.
THE INTERMEDIATE STATE.

ITS REALITY.

THE expression, Intermediate State, denotes the condition of the departed between death and resurrection. The actual phrase is not found in Scripture, but describes what is referred to as the "Unclothed" or "Absent-from-the-body" condition. See for instance the Apostle's words in 2 Cor. 5. 4, "We that are in this tabernacle (*i.e.* our present body) do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be *unclothed* (*i.e.* die and exist without the body) but clothed upon (*i.e.* receive our resurrection body at the coming of the Lord) that mortality might be swallowed up of life" (v. 4). When the Lord comes, His people who are found alive on the earth will never know the experience of death, nor the ensuing experience of an unclothed condition, as verse 2 affirms, "If so be (the *if* here has not the sense of doubt, but of 'seeing that') that being clothed, we shall not be found naked." That is, they would be clothed upon at once with their resurrection and glorified body, and never be found in an unclothed or naked state. These are true believers (how else could they be thus clothed?). Consequently the idea that "naked" expresses here, as some have stated, a manifestation of unreality and final perdition, cannot logically be upheld. Naturally the unclothed condition for a human spirit, created to inhabit a body, is not the ideal. It is an unnatural condition, and

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yet Paul, so great was his desire to be with Christ, was willing to enter into this disembodied and abnormal state, so as to be nearer His Lord, than is possible here: "We are confident and willing," he writes, "rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord." This cannot describe the resurrection day, as believers will not then be "absent from the body", but the "Intermediate State"—a blessed condition of communion with Christ, above anything known before, as the apostle says (Phil. 1.), "To depart and to be with Christ which is far better." It cannot, however, equal the perfect blessedness to be experienced on the resurrection morning. Then the believer will find himself conformed, spirit, soul and body, to the image of Christ.

There is one expression in this passage which we must consider, as it has been used to support the contrary idea, that the full state of blessedness ensues at once after death. "For we know that if our earthly house of this Tabernacle were dissolved *we have a building of God, a house not made with hands eternal in the heavens*" (v. 1). This is pressed to mean that—we have this house at once, but only as a temporary provision, but the following words rule such an interpretation out, for the house, whatever it be, will be *eternal* in the heavens. It represents a final not a temporary state of blessing. The context, moreover, shows that this does not describe a condition at once enjoyed by the believer at death, for then there would be no sense in speaking of an "unclothed state" (*e.g.*, v. 4, "Not for that we would be unclothed"). The words only mean we have it promised or in prospect, as an Israelite might have said to his son who would have expressed regret on the Passover night, at the necessity of leaving their house in Egypt, "Well, if we leave this one we have one in Canaan we shall never have to leave," although an intermediate wilderness lay between. That there

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must be an intermediate state is clear from the fact that the resurrection of the body is not a present or merely an individual experience, but future and collective. The Lord said, "The hour is *coming*, that all that are in the graves shall hear His voice and shall come forth, they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of judgment" (John 5.). We know from Rev. 20. 5 that a thousand years will elapse between these two resurrections. "But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This (referring to the previous verse) is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power." The second resurrection, that is of the wicked dead, only occurs in verse 12, "And I saw the dead small and great stand before God." This will be the Judgment of the Great White Throne—the final assize, ending up with the terrible sentence, "And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." This is all future, so that there must be an intermediate state between death and resurrection, and that for both the just and the unjust.

What then is its character? Is it a prolongation of probation—a further opportunity for those who have died in their sins, of being purified from those sins and made fit for heaven, or is probation over, and the destiny of each settled, though its degree not yet assigned? In other words, are such to be compared to debtors working off their liabilities, or to condemn convicts awaiting in prison the execution of their sentence? The Lord Himself settles the matter once and for all, for any who are subject to His word, for in Luke 16. He lifts the veil of the Unseen World—the place of departed spirits, as it was, when He was on earth, and shows us two specimen men—one in Paradise, the other (not in

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Gehenna, the final place of the lost, but) in Hades,* the Unseen World, the place of departed spirits: the vestibule of Hell, and of a similar character. That this does not represent the Eternal state is evident from the fact that the lost rich man has five brethren still alive on the earth, living ungodly lives, *as he had himself done, but still where he supposed a warning from Lazarus might arrest their downward course.*

The reply of Abraham not only shows the futility of any such testimony from the grave as the lost rich man proposed, but also that his own condition was final, as the great gulf testified. I ask my readers to turn to Luke 16. and read verses 19 to 31, whence it may be seen that not only is the intermediate state (1) a disembodied state, but (2) a state of real existence. The persons are real persons—Abraham, Lazarus, the nameless rich man, who, though dead to the world, are not dead to God, for “all live unto Him” (Luke 20. 38). (3) It is a conscious state, not one of soul-sleep or unconsciousness, as certain false teachers would have us believe, “He (that is Lazarus) is *comforted* and thou art *tormented*” (v. 25). (4) A state of *recognition* and *remembrance*: “*Father Abraham*”, “*Send Lazarus*”! “*I have five brethren*”, “*Son remember*”! (5) An immediate state: it is *at once entered upon* at death. “The rich man died, and was buried, and in hell (Gk., Hades) he lifted up his eyes being in torments.” “It came to pass that the beggar died and was carried by the angels into Abraham’s bosom.” To this we may add the words of Christ to the repentant thief: “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise” (Luke 23. 43). (6) A present experience of punish-

* This is the word employed by the Lord. “In hell He lifted up His eyes being in torment.”

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ment already begun, corresponding to the imprisonment of a condemned criminal, prior to the carrying out of his final sentence for the ungodly, as it is said of the rich man, are already in torment. Indeed he calls his abode; not "this place of cleansing", but "this place of torment". Lazarus, on the other hand, is already comforted. We may compare with this again the words of the Apostle Paul, "To depart and to be with Christ which is far better" (Phil. 1. 23); and this without prejudice to the fact that neither the full blessedness of the resurrection morn nor yet the full terrors of the lake of fire are yet experienced. (7) An irrevocable state—"between us and you, there is a *great gulf fixed*, so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence" (v. 26). Clearly any thought of a further probation is ruled out by such words.

ITS DENIAL.

All this is denied by most of the quasi-religious systems around us to-day, such as Spiritism, Theosophy, Christian Science, Seventh-day Adventism, Russellism, etc. It would be strange indeed if such systems, which deny all the fundamentals of the Christian faith, the fall of man, atonement by the blood-shedding of Christ, His deity, etc., should be sound on the future state. They deny their need of a Saviour and so reject the Lord Jesus Christ, Who is willing to be theirs.

Certainly for the Spiritist, death is no crisis, for probation is not over. Spiritual development continues without interruption. They cannot deny death, but they do deny resurrection of the body, so that there can be no intermediate state. They make no claim to base their teaching on the Scriptures, but believe what their familiar spirits communicate to

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them. Theosophy borrows widely from Hinduism, which like Spiritism is purely demoniacal (1 Cor. 10. 10-20). The spiritist affirms that after death souls enter into seven revolving spheres or stages of progress, corresponding closely to the seven planes of Theosophy. Only the two lowest are places of suffering, the third is a place of discomfort, much like the earth with its compensations, spiritual arm-chairs, cigars, whiskies, animal pets, debating-societies, lending-libraries, and then follow other stages of various degrees of happiness; but man is his own saviour, and very little is heard of God or Christ, nor does the spiritist seem to want to be brought nearer them. His ideal heaven is eventually merely a more comfortable worldly place. Spiritists do believe, they say, in a hell, as a great remedial agency (fire being apparently the only thing they know of which can cleanse away sin or improve the sinner), but "no great gulf is fixed between it and heaven", say these teachers, in flagrant contradiction to our Lord Himself. Can anyone doubt that such a system emanates directly from Satan, the great seducing spirit, who led our first parents to their fall with his lies. Truly Spiritism is no new thing, seeing that it began in Eden, and is condemned by the Spirit of God, throughout the Scriptures; thus "Thou shalt *not suffer a witch to live*" (Exod. 22. 18), "Regard not them that have familiar spirits, neither seek after wizards, to be *defiled* by them" (Lev. 19. 31), "The soul that turneth after such as have familiar spirits, I will even set *My face against* that soul, and will cut him off from among his people" (chap. 20. 6), "There shall not be found among you a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard or a *necromancer*; for all that do these things are an *abomination* unto the Lord" (Deut. 18. 10), "And when they shall say unto you, seek unto them that have familiar spirits and unto wizards that peep and mutter;

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should not a people seek unto their God? *For the living to the dead?* To the law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them" (Isa. 8. 19, 20).

In closing I will cite one more solemn passage as to the eternal fate of those who yield to such practices, in which the Spirit of God affirms that "sorcerers" (another name for spiritists), classing them with "the abominable and murderers, and whoremongers, and idolators and all liars", "shall have their part in the lake, which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death" (Rev. 21. 8). From which we gather that Spiritism is deceptive, defiling, forbidden, abominable to God, punishable (under the Mosaic law) with death in this world, and leading its votaries straight to the lake of fire in the next. It is readily perceived that for Spiritism as a system and for kindred cults there is no intermediate state. But while such deny the truth, the Roman Catholic system travesties it.

THE TRAVESTY: PURGATORY.

Purgatory, from a Latin word, *purgare*, to cleanse, is a state of suffering after death in which the souls of those who die in venial sin, or who still owe some debt of temporal punishment for mortal sin, are rendered fit for heaven.

† This is the Roman Doctrine, so that the Papal Church does hold an "Intermediate State" in its own peculiar partial sense, that is, for all who are not bad enough to go to Hell, or good enough to go to Heaven; there is an Intermediate State filled up with

* I recommend any who would know more of the truth of Spiritism to read "Modern Spiritism", by Dr. A. T. Schofield, or "Heresies", by William C. Irvine, Editor of the "Indian Christian". (Messrs. J. Ritchie, Ltd., Kilmarnock, N.B.).

† Infallibility (Salmon), p. 10.

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Purgatory. This Purgatory, though taught by the Roman hierarchy, and almost universally believed by the rank and file of Romanists, who, possibly, because the doctrine is a great source of revenue to the priests, are left by them in this belief, has never been authoritatively laid down or localized by pope or council as an article of faith binding on the conscience of every Romanist. If you believe current stories of Purgatory you are commended for your faith, if not, you do not incur official censure. At least, up to the time of Augustine of Hippo,* at the beginning of the fifth century, it was only held as a speculative belief, which might or might not be true. But what is this without the authority of the Scriptures. And high Romanist authorities, such as the late Cardinal Wiseman, admit that there is not a word about it in the Bible. It is in fact the merest speculation. It is certain that it was not arrived at even by tradition or Augustine would have known of it before.

According to Rome there are five possible locations in the future state: the lowest of all, Hell; above that, Purgatory; next, the limbo of unbaptized children; then the limbo of the Patriarchs; and over all, Heaven.

As for the first—Hell—it is supposed by these teachers to be at the centre of the earth, and is for all those who die in mortal sin, and theoretically for all who die outside the pale of the R.C. Church. Those who go there are definitely lost forever. That it is no empty place, the testimony of the well-known Bernard of Clairvaux among others is quoted. This "saint" is said to have enjoyed the privilege on two successive days, of standing, by the judgment throne of God, and hearing the sentences pronounced on all the souls that died on those two days. He was

* De Civitate Dei xxx. 26.

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horrified to find that of 80,000 souls, only three of grown-up persons were saved on the first day, and only two on the second, and that of these five not one went direct to heaven; all had to visit purgatory for an indefinite period. The testimony of Bernard is not a good advertisement for that salvation by human merit, on which the whole Romanist system relies. If, out of the 80,000 souls, 79,995 were lost for ever in Hell, and only five had any hope of Heaven, and that only after centuries in the fires of Purgatory, the Romish boast that outside the church, there is no salvation should be modified into, there is no salvation inside it.

What a contrast to all this is found in the Word of God, which tells us plainly of salvation sure and perfect for all through repentance and faith in the finished work of Christ, and of His precious blood which cleanses us from all sin, and of a great multitude which no man can number, who have washed their robes and made them white in the Blood of the Lamb, and are therefore before the throne of God. Before considering Purgatory further, we might say in passing that the Limbo of the Patriarchs is now held to be empty since the resurrection of Christ, who transferred them to be with Him in the Paradise above, and that of children is reserved, as we have stated, for the unbaptized. They do not suffer, but they are denied entrance into heaven, or the beatific vision. This is merely a pious belief, necessitated by the unscriptural practice of infant baptism and the doctrine that baptism cleanses from original sin. But the Lord Jesus expressly tells us, "In heaven their angels (*i.e.* of little ones, of whose baptism not a word is said) do always behold the face of My Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 18.). It would be strange that the little ones should enjoy a lower place than their ministering angels. In Luke 19., where the Lord is speaking of an adult,

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Zacchæus, He says, "The Son of Man is come to seek *and to save* that which is lost"; the adult, being of responsible age, can offer resistance to the appeal of Christ, but here in Matthew's Gospel the words run simply, "The Son of Man is come *to save* that which is lost," for infants have no responsibility, and are saved by the grace of God alone as we have already seen. They are lost without knowing it by the fall of Adam, and saved without knowing it by the atonement of Christ.

We may safely then hold that all children dying before the age of responsibility are in heaven with Christ, and that for eternity, that not one such will be found in any other part of the Universe of God. The doctrine of Purgatory has been gradually built up on apparitions and visions, said to have been vouchsafed mostly to highly imaginative and hysterical females, on the authority or veracity of which even the Pope makes no pronouncement.

Purgatory is supposed to be divided into three regions according to the severity of punishment due to its inmates. The lowest is principally occupied by Popes, Bishops, and other dignatories of the R.C. Church. The doctrine is not based on any Scriptural teaching, but on deductions from incidental passages as, *e.g.*, 2 Maccabees 42 seq; an Apocryphal book never recognised by the Jews as part of their true Canon—which seems to indicate a common belief among them as to the efficacy of prayers for the dead. Our Lord's teaching and the apostles then differed from the current belief, seeing that prayers for the dead are nowhere taught in the Scriptures. However, this practice is assumed as right and useful. Then for whom are such prayers to be offered. The saved in Heaven do not need them, the lost in Hell cannot benefit by them. There must be, it is argued, a third class, neither saved nor lost, for whom prayer is needed and effective. Purgatory then must exist.

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It is one invention of man to justify another. There is only one Purgatory, or place of cleansing, as the word implies, the Cross of Christ: only one means of cleansing, His precious "Blood" that "cleanseth from all sin". Instead of these, Rome has instituted Purgatory and its flames, but as Cowper says :

"The dying thief rejoiced to see that fountain
in his day,
And there may I, though vile as he, wash all
my sins away."

In one moment that hell-deserving criminal became whiter than snow and fit for Paradise, through faith in the Lord Jesus. Who at that very moment was "bearing His sins in His own body on the tree" (1 Pet. 2. 22). He ought, admittedly, according to the Roman doctrine, to have gone to Purgatory at least for a number of years, but this is got over by the theory that he made a perfect act of contrition at the last moment, from pure love of God, and so could dispense with the cleansing flames.

It is always something that man can do, according to the Romish theory, that can get him to Heaven; acts of merit, acts of religion; acts of contrition; acts of self-inflicted pain, or suffering in Purgatory; but how little place is given to "the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Heb. 10. 10), that is His atoning sufferings, of which the Scriptures speak so much. We are not surprised that so few Romanists are saved, if they trust in the things they do. But this explanation of the robber's sudden and complete transformation sounds as though invented for the occasion. He did acknowledge that he was suffering justly for his sins, but not a word do we find of any perfect act of contrition. He believed in the Lord as far as it was possible for him then to do, and that was enough. His sins were forgiven

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and cleansed away, because of the vicarious sufferings which Christ was enduring once for all on the Cross, for him and for vast multitudes besides. It is there we must look, on Him we must trust. This has ever been the sole hope of the redeemed of all ages

When John beholds the great multitude that no man could number, and is told whence and who they are, he learns, that they have come out of the great tribulation and have *washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb*, and his heavenly mentor adds, "*Therefore* are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple" (Rev. 7. 14-15). They could not have all made "perfect acts of contrition"; all we know is, they had accepted by faith the blood of Christ as their sufficient atonement; nothing is added of purgatory or masses or money-payments, which seem to compose the essentials of salvation, according to the Roman Catholic Church. To say that believers need to be made fit for Heaven is a confusion, between Christian acceptance in Christ or His justification, which is perfect, and the same for all believers, and Christian attainment or sanctification, which comes subsequently and varies with each believer. Not even had the Apostle Paul attained to perfection (Phil. 3. 12), but he was not trusting in that for his salvation as the concluding verses of the chapter show (See vv. 20, 21). He was not seeking a place in Heaven; *that* he had received by grace; he was seeking a prize in Heaven, and that he had not attained to. The two things are quite distinct.

In writing to the Colossians, who were ordinary Christians like most believers to-day, he joins them with himself, "Giving thanks unto the Father who *hath made us meet* to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light" (Col. 1. 12). But in chapter 3.

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he expects them to "seek the things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God" (chap. 3. 1). In other words, since you are going to Heaven, be heavenly-minded. We see at once how sadly all the dark systems of men come short of the Gospel of the grace of God. And where is Christ in it all? He might never have suffered and risen again, and the practical value attached to His work is, for all intents and purposes, nil. The Apostle Peter tells us, "Christ once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, *that He might bring us to God*—not to purgatory, which is the highest blessing anyone in the Romish Church but "a perfect saint" can hope for—but to God.

The whole idea of being fit for Heaven by suffering is based on a misunderstanding. It is to have the sinful nature, which is unchanged even in believers, made holy. It would be far easier to wash coal white or to make poison wholesome food. When a man is brought to God and believes on his Son, not only does he receive forgiveness of his sins and cleansing from all defilement, but he is born again; that is he becomes a new man in Christ Jesus, the Holy Spirit indwells him, and he is henceforth possessed of a new nature, in which he is united to Christ and becomes holy in Him. It is this new man that is fit for Heaven, not the old which was condemned at the Cross. All that we had done as sinners, our sins and all that we were as sinners—our sin—was dealt with there. The first was borne by Christ; the second was condemned in the Person of Christ, and all now are forever put away from before a Holy God.

What we are called to, is to "abide in Christ", to "stand fast in the liberty wherewith He hath made us free", to "walk in the Spirit and not to fulfil the lusts of the flesh". He who does this most will have most reward in the coming kingdom.

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But when Christ comes, all that is of the flesh will disappear, the saint will no longer have in him an evil nature to humble and annoy, but will in all things be conformed to the image of Christ. No wonder the pious members of the Roman Catholic Church are in slavish bondage at the prospect of death, and at what will happen beyond it. In fact the more pious they are, the worse their fears; for they are under law, and can never enjoy settled peace with God. "They have a zeal of God but not according to knowledge, for they, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God; for Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth" (Rom. 10. 2, 3).

How different the experience of the true believer! "To depart and to be with Christ, which is *far better*" (Phil. 1. 23). "For *we know* that if the earthly house of this tabernacle be dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" (2 Cor. 5. 1). "We look for the Saviour who shall change the body of our humiliation, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body" (Phil. 3. 21). This blessed prospect is for the most unworthy who will trust in Christ alone, for He declares, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but is passed from death to life" (John 5. 24).

CHAPTER II.

THE MILLENNIAL REIGN AND THE EVERLASTING KINGDOM.

ALTHOUGH these papers are not primarily a prophetic study of events, which are shortly to transpire on the earth, we must briefly touch on Christ's future reign, in its two phases—the heavenly, in which all saints, who will have quitted this world by death or translation, will have a share, and the earthly, which will last a thousand years on the earth, and eventually merge into “the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ”.

God has a wonderful programme: not only has He glorified His Son in Heaven, but He will also glorify Him in the very scene of His rejection. He must enjoy the fruits of His victory where He won it. He will be King of both the heavenly and earthly kingdoms. To set up this latter He will come with all His saints. The destruction of the armies of His enemies will be followed by the judgment of the living nations, who survive them. The judge will divide them, that is the individuals comprising them, as a shepherd divideth the sheep from the goats, and these (the reprobates) shall go into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal. This judgment will determine the eternal state of those judged. At the same epoch the judgment of the twelve tribes of Israel will be carried out, and of this judgment the twelve apostles will be assessors with Him, to Whom all judgment is committed, for both are to take place when the Son of Man shall sit on the throne of His glory (See Matt. 19. 28 and 25. 31). The saved, whether of the nations or Israel, will form the *nucleus* of the Millennial Kingdom.

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THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE EARTHLY KINGDOM.

At state of things quite unprecedented will prevail on the earth during this period. It will be characterized

(1) *by the Presence of the King.*

The Personal revelation of the Son of Man in his glory, will then be manifested to all, as it was revealed to a chosen few on the Mount of Transfiguration. Not that the Lord will, of necessity, be continuously on the earth. He will reign over it as well as on it. The Prince of Ezekiel's prophecy (*e.g.*, chap. 44. 3) will act as His Viceroy in His eventual absence. Communication will then be established between Heaven and Earth. The true Jacob's ladder will be set up and the angels of God will be seen ascending and descending upon the Son of Man (See Gen. 28. 12 and John 1. 51). He will be the connecting link between Heaven and Earth, and the centre and source of blessing. His glory, His mighty deeds, His wonderful words, will fill the Earth. His dominions will "stretch from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth." And all kings shall fall before Him: all nations shall serve Him, and "daily shall He be praised" (Psa. 72. 8, 11, 15). His will be a righteous rule and based on atonement. This is why our Lord would not accept the crown from an unrepentant nation: they did not acknowledge His righteous claims, which alone atonement upholds. If men rebel, then they will find that the rod that rules them is a rod of iron, lawlessness will be met with condign punishment. Then all wrongs will be righted; all abuses and monopolies swept away, and one great cause of sin will be banished from the scene in

(2) *the Absence of the Usurper.*

The first thing that will occur at the return of the Son of Man, after the destructions of the armies of the revived Roman Empire confederacy, and the

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summary judgment of the two rebel leaders, the Beast and the false Prophet, will be the imprisonment of the Arch-Rebel designated under his four-fold description of the dragon, the serpent, the devil and Satan. But it is to be noted that he is not sent to Hades, the place of departed human spirits, nor to the lake of fire, where the beast and the false prophet will be, but to another place called the Abyss or Bottomless Pit, there to be kept in durance vile for a thousand years. Two questions seem naturally to arise from the fact, first, Why not to hell proper? Because he is to be allowed out again (and no one could ever emerge from the lake of fire) to shew that a thousand years in that awful prison-house cannot change his character, nor a thousand years of the manifested glory of God, man's apart from the grace of God. The second question is, Why is no mention made of Satan's host of fallen angels? They are mentioned in chapter 12. as having been cast out with Satan from Heaven to the earth, but from that point onwards no mention is made of them. It is quite unthinkable that they should be left free to roam about on the earth to trouble and tempt during the millennium, and equally so that they should escape the final doom of their leader. In fact by the words of Christ, everlasting fire was prepared for them equally with him (Matt. 25. 41). The simple explanation is, I hold, that they are all included with their leader representatively. They are seen in him, they will be shut up with him in the pit, loosed with him from thence, and finally cast into the lake of fire with him (See also Isa. 24. 22—"the host of the high ones that are on high"). The absence of Satan and his angels during the millennium will indeed be an immense relief to the troubled scene, freeing the world from the greatest source of temptation from without. Then another characteristic of the millennial earth will be

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(3) *Universal Blessing.*

This will be the natural outcome of the presence of the King: "The earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of God as the waters cover the sea," and a time of universal peace and prosperity will be enjoyed. The promise will at length be fulfilled, "They will beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks, man shall not lift up sword against man, neither shall there be war any more." This will not be the result of conferences of the League of Nations or Arbitration pacts. God alone will "make wars to cease." Then the groaning creation shall enter into rest. "The wolf shall lie down with the lamb, and the lion shall eat straw with the ox." Humanity will be relieved of its three most crushing burdens, sacerdotal religions, military organizations and extortionate business competition. The deserts of the earth will be turned to profit. "They shall be glad, and the desert shall blossom as the rose." These will indeed be "seasons (*Kairoi*) of refreshing from the presence of the Lord" (Acts 3. 19).

(4) *The Kingdom will be the scene of rewards.*

All the saints will share in it, but not all will have the same place, rank or reward therein. These will be allotted at the judgment seat of Christ. Some will have crowns—varying according to their service and faithfulness—incorruptible crowns, crowns of life; of glory, of righteousness. Each will have the place for which they have been fitted, and for which they have fitted themselves. All the tribes of Israel will be restored to their land, and Israel will be the head of the nations. It will be "the time (*chronos*) of the restitution of all things" (Acts 3. 21). Jerusalem will be the Metropolis of the world, and the centre of the earthly Kingdom, and of Jehovah's worship (Zech. 14. 16, 19). Then the earth will know universal prosperity, and from Israel will go forth a

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world-wide testimony to Jehovah (See, *e.g.*, Isa. 66. 18-20), and no doubt untold millions will be gathered to the Name of Christ and eternally saved. But all this must be tested. Satan and his angels will be set at liberty once more, and will go forth to deceive the nations and raise the standard of revolt. In numberless cases they will succeed, and great multitudes will be found ready to yield them allegiance. They will gather together against the Holy City, but the times of war are past: speedy vengeance will be meted out to them, "fire from heaven will devour them". Satan and, no doubt, his angels will then be summarily dealt with and cast into the lake of fire. Following on these tremendous events, the final assize—the judgment of the Great White Throne will be carried through by Him to Whom all judgment is committed, and the wicked dead will receive their final doom, and death and Hades be cast into the lake of fire.

This is the complete victory of Christ, described in 1 Cor. 15. as "the end". "Then cometh the end, when He shall have delivered up the Kingdom of God, even the Father; when He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power, for He must reign until He hath put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death" (vv. 24-26). The delivering up the Kingdom is usually, but I believe quite erroneously, interpreted as meaning that the Lord will transfer the Kingdom to the Father and cease to reign. But if this were so, what would become of the various passages where the never-endingness of the Kingdom is clearly asserted in different ways? Thus, "A Kingdom which shall *never be destroyed*"—nor "*left to another people*" (Dan. 2. 44). "Of the increase of His government of peace *there shall be no end . . . from henceforth, even for ever*" (Isa. 9. 7). "He shall reign over the house of Jacob *for ever*, and of His

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Kingdom there shall be *no end*" (Luke 1. 33). "And He shall reign for *ever and ever*" (Rev. 11. 13), and then later in describing a time subsequent to "the end" referred to in 1 Cor. 15., we still see "the throne of God and of the Lamb" (Rev. 22. 1, 3), and in verse 5 we read of the Lord's servants, "And they shall reign for ever and ever." Will servants reign for ever, and their Lord cease to reign? Impossible. Some under the bondage of this idea, recognising that the Millennial reign will not exhaust what is predicted of Christ's reign, have imagined a long period after the thousand years' reign which they call "the ages of the ages". But "the delivering up of the Kingdom" synchronizes with the final victory of Christ over His enemies and the destruction of death, the last enemy, which takes place as we have seen at the Great White Throne (Rev. 20. 11-14). The difficulty seems to arise from attaching a mistaken meaning to the words "deliver up", namely of handing back the Kingdom in the sense of relinquishing it and ceasing to reign, and neglecting the real meaning, that of restoring it to God purged of every stain, and freed from every foe in enhanced glory. The exact order of the following Greek words fits in exactly with this thought: "Then also (then in the moment of complete victory, no less than during the conflict of the ages and the mediatorial reign) will the Son be subject. That is, He will not even then claim independent rule, but will continue to reign as before as the Viceroy of God, the Father, that God may be (not become, for He is it now) All in All. The Millennial reign will be, as we have already seen, only the first stage of "the Everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. 1. 11).

CHAPTER III.

THE FUTURE STATE OF THE REDEEMED.

IN the Eternal State there will be not only a New Heaven, but also a New Earth, and if during the Millennium there will be, as we have seen, close connection between the two, we can hardly conceive that this will be less so in the Eternal State. No doubt the everlasting inheritance of the twelve tribes of Israel will be on the New Earth, as promised to Abraham (See Gen. 13. 15; 17. 18).

There will also be inhabitants of the New Earth from saved Gentiles, "The nations of them that are saved shall walk in the light of it" (Rev. 21. 24). These will have survived the Millennium having proved themselves as truly of God. There is no reason why the heavenly kingdom should be eternal, and the earthly only temporal, though the conditions are difficult to grasp no less in one than the other. Indeed of the two, possibly the heavenly can be grasped the more easily than the other, owing to the fact that the tabernacle in the wilderness was constructed according to the pattern of heavenly things shewn to Moses in the Mount (Heb. 8. 5). If this be so we learn that

(1) *Heaven is the place of God's glory.* The first thing that would meet the eye of the High Priest on entering the Holiest would be the Shekinah† Glory, before which neither Moses nor the priests could stand at the first, and he only on the ground of the

† From the Hebrew, *shah-chan*—"to dwell". The glory marked God's presence.

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blood of atonement. This corresponds to the central object of heaven: "The glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." "There is no need of the sun, the glory of God doth lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof."

Then (2) *Heaven is the place of God's Holiness.* "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all." Clearly nothing inconsistent with that holiness can be permitted in heaven. "There shall not enter into it anything that defileth . . . but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."

(3) *Heaven is the place of God's righteousness.* Here all the divine claims will have been fully met and safeguarded, as testified by the fact that the One on the throne is the Lamb, bearing for ever in His glorified body the marks of His sacrificial work.

Next (4) *Heaven is the place of God's Love.* "God is love." The Love of the Triune God was engaged and fully manifested in the work of Redemption; the Father gave, the Son offered Himself and it was by the Eternal Spirit that He did so. In heaven this love will be fully enjoyed (See Eph. 2. 7).

Then (5) *Heaven is the place of Conformity to Christ.* To this the redeemed are predestinated "that He might be the firstborn among many brethren (Rom. 8. 29). This perfect conformity to Him will extend to Spirit, Soul, and Body.

"As we have borne the image of the earth, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly" (1 Cor. 15. 49). This complete transformation will take place in the Church on the day that she is caught up to meet the Lord in the air (1 Thess. 4.).

(6) *Heaven is the place of companionship.* The saints will be for ever with the Lord and fit companions for Him, though as the only begotten, Eternal Son, He will always be infinitely above the highest of the redeemed, or the most exalted of angelic beings. The redeemed will never lose the

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sense of His greatness, nor yet of His grace, or of their indebtedness to Him, for He will never lose his character of Redeemer. The blood of Christ will ever become to the redeemed more and more precious, for the Throne of heaven will always be that of God and of the Lamb. Christ is now and ever will be Head of the Church and Saviour of the body, and the Church will always be subject to Him.

(7) *Heaven is a place of employment.* The idea that heaven is a place of eternal rest must be qualified. It is based chiefly on two verses: "They 'rest' from their labours" (Rev. 14. 13), and "There remaineth therefore a rest (Gk. *sabbatismos*) to the people of God" (Heb. 4. 9). The first refers to earthly service, which is often uphill, and opposed by Satan and the world. The character of the service will be different, but it will be real service. The rest referred to in the Hebrews passage is not a future heavenly rest, but present Christ-rest, in contrast with the Creation and Canaan rests, broken or never attained. The believer is called to cease from his own works now, and so enter into his rest. There will be no unemployment in heaven. All will be suitably and happily employed. "His servants shall *serve* Him; they shall see His face and His name shall be in their foreheads." The service will be perfect, varied, and continuous, for "there shall be no night there". To judge from the scenes of Rev. 4. and 5, worship will be one constant employment of the Redeemed, but as to the exact form service will take, little is said. There may be a form of testimony in the universe to angelic hosts or other created beings in the future ages which the Redeemed of this fallen world, and not least the Church, will be specially qualified to render (See, *e.g.*, Psa. 22. 31). There will be the response of love, there

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will be interest and a share in all the purposes of God, and a growth in acquaintance with Him, whom to know is eternal life and that in, and through an ever-increasing knowledge of His Word, which "He has magnified above all His Name, and which is for ever settled in heaven".

(8) *Heaven is a place of perfect blessedness.* All the promises of God will be fully realized then: "He that overcometh shall inherit all things" (Rev. 21. 7), for Christ is Head over all things and the Church (Eph. 1. 22). That inheritance will be incorruptible (death will not mar it); undefiled (sin will not pollute it); fading not away (age will not spoil it) "reserved in heaven for you; nothing can deprive the saints of it. To form an idea of the happiness of heaven we must remind ourselves that true happiness consists on the one hand of what is excluded, no sin, no enemy, no Satan, no pain, no death, no curse, and then in what will be included, as one has well said, "In the perfect adjustment between what we desire and what we possess; between what we are and what we ought to be." It will also entail the perfect satisfaction of every legitimate need and aspiration in the presence of the God and Father of the redeemed, in whose house they will enjoy the eternal privileges of Sonship, of union with Christ, their Lord and Bridegroom, and the fulness of the Spirit whose temple they are unto all the fulness of God. They will know, too, the society of the saved of all ages, of patriarchs, apostles, saints, and also of angels who have ministered here below "to those who shall be heirs of salvation". Above all they will "ever be with the Lord"; "they shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat, for the Lamb that is in the midst of the Throne shall feed them and shall lead them unto living foundations of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

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The question has sometimes been asked, and it is one of the greatest importance. Will there be any possibility in a future eternity of another outbreak of sin and rebellion, when the memory of the present tragedy shall have passed away, if that were ever possible? The failure of the present rebellion under the highest leadership and the most favourable conditions will show its utter futility, and an eternal hell its infinite penalty. But the answer is perfectly plain from other considerations, and is given in two promises, depending on a great and unchangeable fact, which the Spirit of God has caused to be written in one verse for our learning. The two promises are, "There shall be no more curse," and "His servants shall reign for ever and ever," and between them the great fact which secures them for us. The throne is "the throne of God and the Lamb" (Rev. 23. 3), that is, God Himself and the Lamb will guarantee its stability. But there is another, and if possible more potent reason still: the hand that holds the universal sceptre is a pierced hand. Love will ever speak in the scars of Calvary, and will bind the universe together eternally in One: the Spirit of God sustaining it in willing obedience to God. Therefore we conclude that although God will for ever reign over a universe of free moral beings, its eternal and uninterrupted blessing is perfectly secured.

CHAPTER IV.

THE FUTURE OF THE WICKED.

IN these days of general declension, with Christendom worm-eaten with evil doctrine of every kind, it behoves us more than ever to cleave fast to the Scriptures and their unchanging testimony. This is especially necessary in the case of the doctrine of the eternal punishment of the wicked. The denial of this foundation truth (see Heb. 6. 2) opens the door to a general letting-go of fundamentals, such as The Divine Trinity, The Deity of Christ, His Eternal Sonship, The Personality of the Holy Ghost, The Atonement, The Inspiration of the Scriptures, etc.

The general belief of Christians from the beginning has been that the Bible does certainly teach the eternal punishment of the wicked, and nothing can persuade the ordinary man of the world, who is acquainted at all with the Scriptures, that this is not so. This teaching is said to have made many infidels, but the statement is more than doubtful. The only way a man can at all consistently go on in sin is to *profess* not to believe in the warnings of Scripture as to future punishment; but no doubt the fear of hell has acted as a tremendous deterrent to multitudes. Has a new bible then been found in which no hell is taught? It is still left standing in the Revised Version, though the marginal notes tend in some places to obscure the issue. Nor does the reality and finality of the truth we are considering rest on one or two words or phrases; the very resources of the language are exhausted, so to speak, to remove all doubt as to its fearful and enduring character—"for

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ever"; "for evermore"; "for ever and for ever"; their worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched. "Everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord." "Shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him," etc.

This denial is a common feature of heretical sects. They all agree that the Scriptures do not teach eternal punishment, but their unanimity is discounted by the eloquent fact that they cannot agree as to what the Scriptures do teach. Some affirm that it is universal salvation or restoration; others with equal certainty that it is universal extinction of being. Some try to combine the two, but with indifferent success. One American heretical teacher holds that the wicked, after "an *unconscious slumber* (!) in the lake of fire", will all be reconciled to God. But I understand he does provide for a few incorrigibles being left out of the arrangement. These will be annihilated, so that the epithet of "universal reconciliation" is stultified. We may well leave these Satanic sects to devour one another, while we bow to the testimony of God's immutable Word.

THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST.

Let us then apply the Scriptural test to this solemn truth. It is twofold but really one, and should be applied to all teaching to-day. It is not, What do children believe? as has been suggested, for they believe anything they are told; but, Is it according to "the doctrine of Christ"? that is, Did He teach it? and secondly, Is it according to "the doctrine of the apostles"? Did they confirm it? These doctrines are the same, for Christ taught by the Spirit, and the apostles were taught by the same Spirit. We know nothing of that dangerous conception which pits "Jesus" against "Paul", for it ignores the fact that the Spirit carried on in the apostles the teaching which the Lord had begun to communicate to them,

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but could not complete owing to their disabilities. It was not that this needed to be confirmed in the sense of proved true, but developed and enlarged: "He shall bring to your remembrance"; "He shall guide you into all truth." But I believe it is correct to say that all truth, subsequently fully revealed in the doctrine of the apostles, already existed, in embryo at least, in "the doctrine of Christ."†

Now let us examine our Lord's own teaching, which really is fuller than that of the apostles on the subject before us. He loses no time, if we may so say, in setting His Divine seal to the unequivocal testimony of the forerunner to Himself, "Whose fan is in His hand and He will thoroughly purge His floor, and gather His wheat into the garner; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire" (Matt. 3. 12), for in chaps. 5-7, in the very warp and woof of "the Sermon on the Mount", to many, who ignore its contents, the very symbol of "*Christianity freed from all dogma*", He warns of "the danger of hell fire" (5. 22); "of the whole body being cast into hell" (5. 29; 30); of "the broad way that leadeth to destruction, and of the many that go in thereat" (7. 13); and of the ruin of the house built on the sand, when "the rain descended, and the floods came, and the wind blew" (7. 27). What more complete, more irremediable spiritual ruin is pictured than by the ruin of a house, carried away with a flood, the materials themselves scattered and no longer available for their destined use, or in other words destroyed: This is the very sense in which our

† This expression has been taken by some to mean "the doctrine concerning Christ", as though it were objective, whereas, as Alford points out, "the doctrine taught by Christ" is much more likely. This certainly is the case by the analogy of such phrases as "the doctrine of the Pharisees" (Matt. 16. 22); "the doctrine of the apostles", etc., where the subjective meaning is clear.

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Lord speaks in Matt. 10. 28, "Fear Him which is able to *destroy* both soul and body in hell": destroy, not merely kill, much less annihilate, but irremediably ruin. This root—*apollumi*—is used in 9. 17, "The bottles will *perish*: such still exist but are useless for their original purpose. So that all the arguments for the annihilation of the wicked from these words, "destroy", "perish", "lost", fall to the ground. The words represent a condition of total perdition. "None of them shall taste of My supper." They will have enjoyed the pleasures of sin; they will have had their portion of this life; but they will never drink of the river of His pleasures, for they refused the summons to the Gospel feast. It will be a condition of separation from the source of all good. "Depart from Me," and there is no shadow of a hint that they will ever make the return journey, for in chap. 25. we are told by Christ Himself where-unto they depart: "Depart ye cursed into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels." Could more vivid terrific language be used to describe an endless, hopeless, fearful fate:—separated from God, segregated with the devil and his angels? We must put alongside these, those earlier words of the same gospel—"It is better for thee to enter into life halt, or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet, to be cast into everlasting fire" (Matt. 18. 8) (lit., the fire, the everlasting). It will not suffice in that day to allege, as in Matt. 7. 22-23, "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy Name? and in Thy Name have cast out devils? and in Thy Name done many wonderful works!" Nor yet as in Luke 13. 26-28, as other professors, to tell of religious privileges: "We have eaten and drunk in Thy presence and Thou hast taught in our streets." But He shall say, "I tell you I know not whence ye are; depart from Me all ye workers of iniquity. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth," etc. The same

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solemn words occur in other places. But with all their external works and privileges and appearances nothing is said of their new birth, and we may be sure none of them had experienced it, nor had they trusted in the Atoning Work of Christ, and "washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb".

But how unlike these words are to an "unconscious slumber", as the evil teacher above referred to pretends! They seem to be having fearful dreams! Are they "weeping and gnashing their teeth" in their sleep? How terribly these words accord with our Lord's own interpretation of the parable of the tares! "So shall it be at the end of this world. The Son of Man shall send forth His angels and they shall gather out of His Kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth" (Matt. 13. 42). These are not the imaginations, as some would have men believe, of mere bigots, as they would term us, but the measured words of the omniscient, compassionate Son of God, the future Judge, but the present Saviour of mankind. How can it be said with even the appearance of truth that such words bespeak, as some affirm, a "wondrously gracious reticence"? Indeed such would be cruel, not gracious, in face of such appalling perils. It is the Holy One Himself who knew what perdition would entail for the lost, and what atonement would entail for Himself, who uttered these words of solemn warning.

Let us then consider afresh "the doctrine of Christ" on this subject.

Our Lord's closing words in Matthew 25., to which we will now return for further consideration, have long, and in vain, exercised the ingenuity of the opponents of the truth; some seeking to explain them away in one way, some in another. For anyone,

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however, subject to God's truth, the words are plain and simple and leave no loophole for misunderstanding, "These (*i.e.* on the left hand) shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life everlasting"; the same word *aionios* in each case. To refuse to translate the word and talk about *æonian* this and *æonian* that, may seem learned, and may mystify some readers, but it does not really help to clarify the sense. There really is no shadow of an excuse for raising difficulties as to the meaning of this adjective, making allowance for a figurative use of the word, which is perfectly understood in our own language, as when we read of the "everlasting hills", or of a person making everlasting complaints. What we have to do is to find out the general usage of the word in the New Testament. Thus the word is applied to the "covenant" between God and His people (Heb. 13. 20); the consolation of His people by the gospel (2 Thess. 2. 16); the weight of glory to which they are called (2 Cor. 4. 17), and "unseen things" (v. 18), as also Salvation (Heb. 5. 9); Redemption (Heb. 9. 12); Inheritance (v. 15). Surely these occurrences, were they all, would prove that the thought of never-endingness is indissolubly linked with the word in question. But they are not all. The same word is applied to God's glory (1 Pet. 5. 10); "honour and power" (1 Tim. 6. 16); the Spirit (Heb. 9. 12); and God's very Being (Rom. 11. 26). Can the solemn significance of the fact be denied that this very word is applied to hell-fire (Matt. 18. 8); future punishment (Matt. 18. 46); destruction (2 Thess. 1. 9); chains (Jude 7); judgment (Heb. 6. 2) and damnation (Mark 3. 29)? If *aionios* does not represent "everlasting"—applying as it does to God and His glory, His covenant and the blessings of the redeemed—then there is no such thought in the Greek language. To go back to Matthew 25.: What has settled the destiny of those on trial is, we see,

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the treatment meted out by them to those whom the Lord calls "these My brethren" (*i.e.* the faithful ones of Israel His brethren according to the flesh), whose judgment will then be proceeding before the twelve apostles (compare Matt. 19. 28 with 25. 28). This may seem a small matter on which to hang eternal issues, but it is a small matter which means everything. It shews the true bent of each. Moreover, from Revelation 13. 16, we may gather that all on the left hand will have taken the mark of the beast, in spite of God's terrific warnings (compare with this chap. 14. 9).

The word used here for "punishment" (*Kolasis*) has lost in Hellenistic Greek the remedial sense it once had, for the penal.* If annihilation were meant by the phrase "everlasting punishment" then, as has been well remarked, it would be "ended punishment" not "endless punishment". The future punishment of the wicked will be co-existent with that of the devil and his angels, with the inheritance of the redeemed, with the Being and Glory of God and His Kingdom.

In Luke 16., in the story of Dives and Lazarus, the Lord lifts the veil of the unseen world as clearly and as simply as language could. Merely to protest that the passage is a parable, which is more than doubtful, proves nothing, for a parable is intended to convey teaching consistent with its terms. Here the Lord affords us a glimpse into Paradise and its conditions, and into Hades and its conditions. Hades though not exactly the same as Hell, is the same in character, and is, if we may so say, its vestibule during the present intermediate state. How then does He describe the two scenes? He shows us Lazarus in Abraham's bosom in conscious comfort, and Dives in Hades in conscious torment, as he him-

* See Trench's Synonyms of New Testament, § vii.

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self states twice, and in a state of hopelessness, as far as his own deliverance goes, for such a thing he does not even suggest. And the Lord excludes it for He speaks of "a great gulf *fixed*"† between the two abodes, which stamps the condition of things with an unquestionable character of finality. Those who tamper with His words here are the wreckers of humanity and will have to answer to the Lord.

One more passage may suffice to complete this brief survey of our Lord's own unequivocal teaching on this solemn subject; the closing passage of Mark 9. The context is well known. The Lord is warning against holding on to sin: "If thy hand, foot, eye cause thee to offend, cut them off (or pluck it out), it is better for thee to enter into life maimed than having two feet, two hands, two eyes, to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: where their worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched." The antithesis being between "entering into life", and "going or being cast into hell".

The usual way of dealing with this passage by the deniers of eternal punishment is to begin talking about the Valley of Hinnom and the ever-burning fires which they say existed in the place; but this is really so much dust-throwing. It is true there was such a valley to the south-west of Jerusalem, where in ancient times idolatrous rites to Moloch were practised, but this was reclaimed from such uses by King Josiah, and turned into a place where the refuse of the city was disposed of and the dead bodies of criminals cremated. As for the ever-burning fires, authorities like the late Dr. J. B. Lightfoot doubt if they ever existed outside the imagination of these teachers. However, there is no harm in believing that refuse was burnt there, and that the valley had become a symbol of Gehenna. No educated Jew, how-

† *Steerizo*—means to fix firmly, to set fast.

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ever, would confound the geographical valley—Gehinnom, with the place of the lost—Gehenna. The Talmud makes this plain, “In the valley of Hinnon, there is a fire issuing from between two palm trees. It is the door of Gehenna.”. Of course this is a legend, but it is useful as shewing the commonly-received distinction between the literal and the invisible. But our opponents deny this and maintain that all that the Lord meant by His words, quoted above, was cremation of dead bodies in the Valley of Hinnom. But does this explanation adequately represent the Lord’s warning words? Not only does it fail to do so, but it actually robs them of all logical weight. For if cremation of the literal body were all that was intended, the conclusion would be the exact opposite of that which the Lord draws. Manifestly it would be preferable for a man that his corpse should be cremated in the Valley of Hinnom with its full complement of limbs, than endure a painful amputation during life. Little it matters what becomes of the body after death, what does eternally and infinitely matter is, what becomes of the man himself.

“Fear Him, who after He hath killed, hath power to cast into hell, yea I say unto you, fear Him!”

“THE DOCTRINE OF THE APOSTLES.”

This branch of the subject demands no lengthy treatment, for so complete was the doctrine of Christ concerning it, that little remained for the Spirit to add, and the apostles had only to take it over in its integrity. In their public addresses, as recorded in the Acts, they spoke less of the future state of the wicked, and entered far less into detail than their Lord and Saviour, in whose discourses, as we have seen, most of the awe-inspiring imagery is found, describing the future of the wicked. He took upon Himself to sound forth the warning note,

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which proves that there was a future danger corresponding to His own descriptions. Nothing short of eternal punishment could justify the Lord's own repeated warnings, not only of unquenchable fire and the undying worm, but, as though to leave no room for doubt, of the solemn fact that the wicked were to suffer the same retribution as the devil and his angels. Not only so, but He, the Saviour of mankind, asserts again and again that He will personally superintend the carrying out of the sentence. Indeed as has been well said, "Jesus Christ is the Person responsible for the doctrine of eternal perdition, and He it is with Whom all the opponents of this truth are in conflict."

The Lord, moreover, clearly teaches that death is the turning point on which all depends, *e.g.*, in the history of Dives, who asks that his brethren may be warned *before they die*; and this agrees with the plain statement, "*After death* the judgment." What is known as the Intermediate State, is only intermediate with reference to the absence of the body, not as being a state of further probation of the soul. Death is the boundary line between the two æons; "the world that now is, and that which is to come"; there are really only two, and "If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins, and whither I am ye cannot come."

The present is always viewed by our Lord as the only time of probation, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; He that believeth not shall be damned."

Before taking up the actual subject of this paper, we would deal with one objection to eternal punishment, which is often alleged by the ungodly themselves, and which seems on the surface to have a certain weight. The plea is that eternal punishment is out of all proportion to sin committed in a lifetime. But, the fact cannot be denied that even in

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this world, a sin which took but a moment to commit, may mar a man's whole life, and entail a perpetual penal sentence, or being for ever cut off by death. As has been said, "Sin persisted unto the end of life, seems to shew that, were that life prolonged, the persistence would be prolonged too. Persistence in sin shews an attitude to God, why should this attitude ever change?" Will punishment succeed, where grace failed? Sin persisted in is the rejection of God's only remedy, and the consequences must naturally be for always. If punishment could produce what grace fails to do, then it was unnecessary for the Son of God to become flesh and die. But who can affirm that an unpenitent man would ever truly repent? Though actual sin will be impossible in eternity, the will to sin will be present, and would at once be indulged, were the opportunity to recur. The "beast" who will ascend out of the bottomless pit (see Rev. 11. 7), will be identically the same wicked man that he was before, and even more so! Satan loosed from 1000 years in that same fearful place, will emerge unchanged, the same irreconcilable enemy of God and man, as he had ever been (Rev. 20. 7. 8.), And so we believe it would be with all the wicked lost, who die in their sins, rejecting the grace of God.

Let us now examine the doctrine of the apostles. In their public preaching the apostles included warnings of judgment (*e.g.*, Acts 3. 23; 10. 42; 13. 41; 17. 13, etc.), but these did not form the staple of their testimony, but rather forgiveness through Christ. Such warnings are supplemented in the Epistles. Paul for instance warns of coming wrath in Romans 1. 18, and speaks of those who treasure up wrath against the day of wrath (chap. 2. 5), and of indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish upon every soul that doeth evil (vv. 8, 9). Even the blessings of the redeemed have a solemn voice for

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the wicked, for if there be "no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus"; if their sins are forgiven them, for His Name's sake; if they receive "the gift of God which is eternal life", then condemnation awaits the wicked; their sins remain in God's book of remembrance, they will receive "the wages of sin which is death"—the second death. If they are not reconciled to God in this life a fearful moment awaits them when they will be crushed beneath His feet (1 Cor. 15. 25).

In 2 Thess. 1. the apostle speaks of the days, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven ... in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power. In Hebrews 6. eternal judgment is cited among foundation truths, and the question is asked in chap. 10. 29, "Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy who has trampled under foot the Son of God," etc. ?

With what solemn clearness too do Peter and Jude speak of the coming judgment and the eternal fate of the ungodly: "Against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men," "Suffering the vengeance of eternal fire," "To whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever" (2 Peter 3. 9; Jude 7. 13).

When we come to the Revelation, the warnings of John, "the apostle of love", as some call him, approach in severity those of our Lord. Thus we read in Rev. 14. 10, 11 of him, who takes the mark of the beast, "He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night." Also (chap. 19. 3) of Mystery Babylon "and her smoke rose up for ever

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and ever." Also in verse 20, of the Beast himself and the false prophet. "These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone." Again in chap. 20. 10, 15 it is written, "And the devil, that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are (for these arch-rebels are still surviving), and *they* shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever," and then of all the wicked dead, "and whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." This is further confirmed in chap. 21. 8, "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death" (chap. 21. 8). No doubt it is largely for this that the Book of the Revelation is villified by unbelievers as it is, and yet the closing warnings of chap. 22. 19: "If any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the tree of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book," might deter any but the most hardened enemies of the truth from tampering with the words of this prophecy. It is not denied that all this is unspeakably awful, but it is more prudent to "flee from the wrath to come", than merely to deny that there is any wrath to come. It is not as though God had provided no way of escape. "He wills all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth," and has provided redemption for the sinner at infinite cost to Himself, even by the precious blood of Christ—the Son of His love, as "of a Lamb without blemish and without spot", who "died for our sins according to the Scriptures, was buried and rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures".

Yes, a Divine Person has fully met all the claims

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of Divine justice, and provided for those who believe, a way of escape from entering Hell, but no way of escape for those who once enter. It is strange how little one sees of God's way of salvation in the writings of those who oppose the truth we are now considering. They seem to ignore the sufferings of Christ for sinners, and substitute their own sufferings in the flames of "purgatory" or hell. It is as though we read instead of "The blood of Jesus Christ God's Son cleanseth from all sin", the fire of judgment cleanseth from all sin! It would seem that, much as the natural man hates the doctrine of hell, there is one thing he hates worse—the doctrine of Christ's atonement and the call to repentance, and faith in Him as the way of acceptance. But how can men consistently charge God with injustice in consigning them to eternal punishment, when they persist in refusing the only way in which He can justly save them—His unspeakable "gift of eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord"?

As one has said of the Cross: "It is suffering mysterious, unutterable and inconceivable and *in these* characteristics, *resembling, we doubt not,* the eternal penalty *reserved* for sinners hereafter. . . . But amidst all this intense and perplexing suffering, which utterly confounds the reason, and makes the faculties of man stand aghast, there shine forth love and compassion which stretch into the depths of the infinite, and which ought to make even the hardest heart beat with a responsive echo: God gives his all, Sinner! rather than thou shouldst perish"!

CHAPTER V.

UNIVERSALISM.

A GROUNDLESS HOPE.

“Lord are there few that be saved? and He said unto them, Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able, when once the Master of the house is risen up and hath shut to the door.”—Luke 13. 23-25.

UNIVERSALISM answers, on the contrary, ALL including the devil and his angels, though some so-called universalists, I believe, except these, will sooner or later be saved, restored to God's favour and enjoy eternal blessing. This doctrine does not generally deny all future punishment, but only its penal and unending character: it can only, it is argued, be remedial and temporary, otherwise God's love, and His ability to govern the Universe would be compromised. But does the fact that there are convicts serving life-sentences at Portland prove that the King's government has failed? No, rather the exact opposite. It only proves that the convicts have failed.

No doubt the universalist conception is very seductive to the natural mind. It paints God as the kind Universal Father, only intent on making everybody happy; and relieves the uneasy conscience of the dread spectre of an irrevocable judgment.

But doctrines, however agreeable, if not based on God's word, are deceptive and dangerous. These not only ignore the claims of God's holiness and fly in

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the face of our Lord's plain statements, but clash with the facts of life; for the world, in spite of God's love and power, is undeniably full of sorrow and suffering, and it would be hard to prove that this is only remedial. The question is, Did God, when He conferred on angels and men the gift of moral freedom, undertake to make everything come right in the end, whether they used it well or ill? On the contrary, He solemnly warned men (and by inference angels) of the immediate and terrible consequences of disobedience. "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die"; and offered no hope whatever in case of disobedience. The angels that sinned did so in full light of heaven and no atonement has been provided for them (Heb. 2. 16, R.V.; Matt. 25. 41): with man the case was different, and God in grace came in with the promise of a Deliverer: otherwise the whole race must have perished, without hope. But what is there to shew that for those who refuse to avail themselves of the divine remedy, the effect of sin will ever pass away? God would have made them vessels of mercy to display His grace; they have fitted themselves to be vessels of wrath to display His judgment. An endless hell will not compromise God's love, for He has given full proof of this at infinite cost by the gift of His Son, as a ransom for all, "God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son." Must He give a further proof by stultifying His holy claims and saving even those who spurn His gift? Were this possible, the first were needless. Really "Restorationism" sets aside the three great factors in the one and only salvation provided for man—Christ's Atoning Blood, the Father's saving grace, and the Spirit's sanctifying power—and substitutes the flames of a man-invented purgatory, which can never take away sin. How hell is going to produce in the lost, loving submission to God and fitness for heaven, when His grace and goodness

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have failed to do so, is left an unsolved mystery. Sin stereotypes itself : character tends to permanency ; the soul in its opposition to God gets fixed even in this life, like clay in the kiln. Habits gather power and volume as they go, and the time comes when "he that is unjust must be unjust still, and he that is filthy be filthy still". Water would sooner run up Niagara, than evil persevered in rise to good. The Lord's words to certain religious sinners of His day sealed their doom. "Ye shall die in your sins : whither I go, ye cannot come" (John 8. 21). To the objection that an endless hell would involve endless sinning, the reply is that though hell will be the abode of impenitent sinners, it will *not be a place of sinning*. The will to sin will be present, but not the power. It would be a very defective system which allowed convicts to practise the very sins, for which they were being punished. But God may cause even the fearful necessity of hell to work to some salutary end. Those who perished in the flood and in the overthrow of the Cities of the plain have served ever since as an example to others (2 Pet. 2. 4, 5 ; Jude 7), so the eternal judgment of the impenitent may serve as a factor in the moral stability of the Universe. Could all rebels be restored to blessing apart from atonement and repentance, what would prevent yet another rebellion breaking out at some future epoch of eternity, when the present tragedy had sunk into oblivion? Experience, expedience and revelation cry out against this delusive theory. Now we may ask

DID OUR LORD TEACH ANY FUTURE PROBATION?

Had the vindication of God's love demanded this, would not our Lord have put it beyond question. None spoke so clearly as He of eternal life, through faith in Himself, none so clearly of the perdition of the unbeliever : where did He give one hint of

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“another chance” in a future state? Are His words, taken only from one gospel, in harmony with such a thought? “Fear Him, which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell” (Matt. 10. 28). “The Son of Man . . . shall cast them into a furnace of fire, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth” (Chap. 13. 42). “It is better for thee to enter into life, halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire” (Chap. 18. 9). “Depart ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels . . . and these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life everlasting” (Chap. 25. 41, 46).

Does Christ give any hope in such words of a future probation?

DID OUR LORD TEACH UNIVERSALISM?

What has already been said negatives this, but we may add the following additional proof. When asked by one, “Lord, are there few that be saved?” He might have set the matter for ever at rest by replying, “Certainly not ‘few’, for *all* will eventually be saved.” Instead, He urged His hearers to “strive” (lit. agonize) to enter in at the strait gate, for many will seek to enter in *and shall not be able* when once the Master of the house has risen up and shut to the door” (Luke 13. 24, 25). The same gate that shuts in some, will shut out others, as in the case of the Ark (Gen. 7. 16) and the marriage feast (Matt. 25. 10). The many on the broad way, and the few* who find the narrow, are not travelling to the same des-

* Here the Lord is referring to those of responsible state, without prejudice to the multitudes of souls that pass away before they know their right hand from their left, and are therefore not responsible to find the narrow way. All such are lost without knowing it by disobedience of Adam, and are saved without knowing it by the redemptive work of Christ.

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tionation (see Matt. 7. 13). We may be sure that wherever God can righteously apply to any soul the infinite value of the blood of Christ, in whatever nation or dispensation, that soul will be brought into eternal blessing, but where the Gospel is preached to responsible hearers, the principle holds good, "He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; He that believeth not, shall be damned." Is there not a dread finality about such words? Again He speaks of *a great gulf fixed* between Paradise and perdition; the "comforted" and the "tormented", *which none* can pass (Luke 16. 26). Is it not the merest trifling to hold out the love of God as a possible ground of future hope to men who refuse it as a present refuge? Such words as "I also will laugh at your calamity, I will mock when your fear cometh", "Vengeance is mine, I will recompense, saith the Lord", sound the death-knell of all such vain hopes. The universalist is the murderer of souls; luring on sinners with his false hopes to their eternal doom.

ALLEGED ARGUMENTS FOR UNIVERSALISM.

To meet the clear statements of Scripture, something more is needed than the sentimental reasonings we have listened to. Accordingly, phrases, usually taken out of their setting, are quoted from the New Testament expressing God's willingness to save all, Christ's death for all—*e.g.*, "He gave Himself a ransom for all"; but this is to confuse the potential value of His work, with its actual value. It is sufficient for all, but only efficient for those who believe. The word "All" is often limited by its context. We must ask, All of whom? All of what? When we read the words, "By Him to reconcile all things unto Himself, whether things in earth or things in heaven" (Col. 1. 20), we notice a double limitation; it is "things" not "persons". Indeed what *persons* in

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heaven could need reconciling. Again, "under the earth", *i.e.* the nether regions, is excluded here, though, where subjection is referred to as Phil. 2., they are included. This same limitation applies to Eph. 1. 16, "that in the dispensation of the fulness of times He might gather together (lit. : head up) in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth". There is no mention of the nether regions, they will be excluded from the blessing. Romans 5. 19 is another verse quoted as proving the final restoration of all, but it says nothing of the kind, "As by one man's disobedience (Adam's fall) many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one (Christ's death) shall many be made righteous." As one might say of a wreck, "As many were wrecked in the ship, so many were saved in the life-boat" (*i.e.* all who got in).

Repentance and faith have been insisted on all through the Epistle, why divorce them from this verse? Again such phrases as "All shall know me from the least to the greatest" and "the Restitution of all things" are put forth as teaching Universalism, but a reference to Heb. 8. and Acts 3. will shew that the future blessing of Israel is in view in both passages. What does the phrase, the Restitution of all things, describe, but the antitype of the Day of Jubilee, when every Israelite will return to his home and possessions.

One more verse which is quoted by universalists may be considered, namely: 1 Cor. 15. 22-28. The words "when He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power" is interpreted as meaning universal reconciliation to Him, but surely the true meaning is given in verse 25; these enemies are "put under His feet" or "destroyed" like death in verse 26, for that is the word translated "put down" in verse 24. Crushing as a footstool beneath the feet would be a strange way of expressing "reconcil-

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iation". It was not thus the father received the prodigal, but with embraces. But when Joshua made his captains put their feet on the necks of the Amorite Kings, it meant their total defeat and doom, and they were all hung before nightfall.

The events of 1 Cor. 15. 24-28 will take place, not at the end of some immense period of time—"The ages of the ages,"* but at the close of the Millennial reign when Satan and the wicked dead will be dealt with summarily and *seriatim*. The Day of grace will then be passed and nothing but the day of wrath remain for the Christ-rejector.

There are seven Universals in the Scriptures, which universalists ask us to mistake for an eighth, Universal Restoration, which we do not find.† We do find :

1. *The Universal Creatorship of God*. "God who created all things" (Eph. 3. 9). In this sense only is the Universal Fatherhood of God true, but it must be distinguished from His Fatherhood of those who believe in His Son (John 1. 12; and 1 John 3. 1).

* This phrase is the equivalent in the Greek for what we know as "Eternity" as its usage shews. Thus it occurs in Gal. 1. 5; 1 Tim. 1. 17; Rev. 1. 5; in ascriptions of Glory to God; in Rev. 4. 9, 10; 5. 14; 10. 6; of God's existence; in Rev. 1. 21 of the existence of Christ. Is it seriously suggested that any distinction is intended between this phrase and eternity? In what other way could the thought of eternity be expressed? Interspersed among these occurrences are solemn phrases descriptive of the fate of the lost, i. q. Rev. 14. 11; 19. 3; 20. 10. What can be logically deduced from this, but that as long as God is God, so long will His enemies abide under His righteous Judgment. So with the cognate phrases "to the age of the age", "to the age", which can be no more differentiated, in their ordinary usage, than our English phrases, "for ever", "for evermore", "for ever and for ever".

† See Prelude on "Eternal Punishment", by the late Joseph Cook of Boston.

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In this sense His tender mercies are over all His works. He is the Saviour and preserver of all men, specially of them that believe. If "Saviour" were intended in the Universalist sense why "specially" of some?

2. *Universal Fall of Man.* "Through one man sin entered into the world and death through sin and so death passed unto all men, for that all sinned" (Rom. 5. 12, R.V.).

3. *Universal Propitiation of Christ.* Christ is the propitiation—for the whole world (1 John 2. 2, R.V.).

The Gospel can now be preached to every creature. Salvation is brought within the reach of all.

Christ is potentially the light that lighteth every man (John 1. 9); the Lamb that taketh away the sin of the world—(Chap. 1. 29); the bread that giveth life unto the world (Chap. 6. 33); but only actually to those who repent and believe the Gospel.

4. *Universal Goodwill of God to Man.* "God so loved the world," "He will have all men to be saved" (1 Tim. 2. 4). "He is not willing that any should perish" (2 Pet. 3. 9); but to some the Lord had to say, "Ye will not come to Me, that ye might have life" (John 5. 40).

5. *Universal Witness to Man.* God has not left Himself without a witness (Acts 14. 17). No one is left without sufficient light to repent, whether by creation (Rom. 1. 20; 10. 18); providence (Acts 14. 17); conscience (Rom. 2. 14. 15); or the Gospel (Mark 16. 11).

6. *Universal Resurrection of the Dead.* Though there will not be a simultaneous resurrection, Rev. 20. 3 shewing that there will be at least a thousand years between the resurrection of the just to Life, and that of the unjust to Judgment.

7. *Universal Triumph of Christ.* If not by grace then by power. The universalists ignore this distinction, but when Christ comes in glory, it will not

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be to make peace, but war (2 Thess. 1. 8-9; Rev. 19. 11).

The present-day apostacy has ruled out the doctrine of Eternal Punishment as "out of harmony with modern thought", as though human fashions could affect Divine truths. The unanimous vote of a committee of convicts that life-sentences were unthinkable or hanging "contrary to modern thought," would have no weight with those who make or administer our laws, and far less the pronouncements of Modernism with the Great Lawgiver.

The doctrine denied is too terribly in harmony with the aggravated character of sin; with judgments in the past in the case of flagrant and obstinate sinners; with the plain warnings of Scripture; and not least with the remedy provided, the death of the Son of God become flesh. If "God spared not His own Son" to provide an Atonement for all, how will He spare the sinner who spurns His proffered mercy? NOW is the accepted time; *now* is the day of salvation; he who counts on a future chance will find himself one day *hopelessly* disappointed and for ever lost. To the Annihilationist it is inconceivable that anyone cast into the Lake of fire should survive, to the Universalist it is inadmissible that anyone cast in there should not be ultimately restored to Divine favour. Let these two Satanic systems be consumed one of another! The terrific truth remains, like a clear deep river flowing between muddy and malarious banks, the eternal punishment of the Christ-rejector. If then my reader thou art a Christ-rejector, cease from this suicidal way. God offers thee Christ as thy Saviour. Receive Him, and instead of Eternal Punishment thou shalt have Eternal Life.

CHAPTER VI.
CONDITIONAL IMMORTALITY.

A DELUSIVE ARGUMENT.

THE many false systems of religious belief, which have sprung up in the last hundred years, have at least one feature in common—they all deny the endless punishment of the wicked, which they affirm to be a mere human tradition, inconsistent with the love of God and foreign to the Scriptures. It is strange, if this be true, that the vast majority of Christians, down the ages, should have read the Scriptures so differently, and believed the solemn doctrine so unhesitatingly.

But while the opponents of this doctrine are agreed as to what the Scriptures do not teach, they cannot agree as to what they do teach. There are many shades of belief ranging from extreme Universalism, which we have just been considering in the light of the Scriptures, and which teaches that all will eventually be saved, to extreme Annihilationism, which teaches that all the wicked will become non-existent. Between them lies the truth of the never-ending conscious banishment from God's presence of all who reject the light, and die in their sins. Nor is this an arbitrary decree, it is inevitable. At infinite cost, God has made a sufficient provision for all sinners, in the gift of His only begotten Son, who died for our sins, was buried and rose again, "that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Thus alone can God be justified in saving guilty

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sinner; any other ground would nullify the Cross and stultify His own character. Unbelief alone can shut out the blessing: "He that believeth not the Son shall not see life" (which clearly refutes Universalism), "but the wrath of God abideth on him" (which equally disproves Annihilationism, for how can God's wrath abide on some one who no longer exists?). Certainly annihilation would not be an excessive punishment for a life-time of rebellion against God. Here it is often the good who suffer, and the wicked who prosper. What would become of the justice of God, were annihilation all these latter had to fear? Was it to save from nothing worse than this that our Lord endured the pains of Calvary? His own words cannot be made to fit in with any such theory? "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matt. 25. 41). Surely such words imply, if language means anything, that those who enter that fire will last as long as it lasts. We are accustomed to the words *æonian* and *age-lasting* on the lips of these teachers, as a translation of the word *aionios*—eternal, but they do not impress us, being meaningless. The usage of a word alone determines its meaning, and the usage of this word in the New Testament certainly stamps it with the sense of "endlessness", as we shall see later.

In verse 46 of this passage the Lord uses the same word (*aionios*) to describe the duration both of the life of the saved, and the punishment of the lost. To meet this, some of these agile teachers assert that "eternal life" is not endless, but only lasts the thousand years of the millennial reign; so that to deny the endlessness of punishment they are prepared to sacrifice the endlessness of life. To such extremes are men reduced, who are determined to deny that the Scriptures mean what they say. But as though they knew this would not satisfy, they

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have another objection, which nullifies the first; the word is not "punishing" but "punishment"; it is an endless result, not an endless process. Thus we are treated not only to home-made Greek, but to home-made English. There is no such phrase in English as "eternal punishing". It would be a barbarism. Certainly most people connect punishment with something endured. If eternal non-existence could mean "eternal punishment", then the viper that Paul shook off his hand into the fire at Melita is suffering eternal punishment, for certainly the effect of Paul's action is eternal. The word* here translated "punishment", in the only other place where it occurs in the New Testament means something consciously endured; "fear hath *torment*" (1 John 4. 18).

The expressions "eternal judgment" and "eternal redemption" are quoted by conditionalists to show that "eternal punishment" need not be an eternal process. But though it is true that the sentence of judgment is not always being pronounced, nor the price of redemption always being paid, the wicked will always be consciously enduring the former, and the redeemed consciously enjoying the latter. It is absurd to talk of "eternal punishment" unless some one is enduring it. That convicts should rebel at life-sentences is perfectly natural, but will not open the prison doors. And He "who is of purer eyes

* *Kolasis* is the word, and some insist on its classical sense here of disciplinary suffering; but Trench remarks that "it would be a very serious error to transfer this (i.e. the classical) sense to the Greek of the New Testament, where it is the equivalent of *timoria*—judicial vengeance". (See "New Testament Synonyms, vii."). It may be noted that if this sense of chastening or pruning be adopted in Matt. 25. 46, the argument that punishment implies only an effect, not a process, would have to go, for discipline is a process, but these controversialists do not seem to mind if their alternative arguments are mutually destructive.

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than to behold evil, who cannot look on iniquity", and who "spared not His own Son" to provide an atonement, will certainly not spare those who reject it. This, it is affirmed, would be inconsistent with His love. But if the love of God alone could save, Calvary was superfluous and a cruel mistake. How grave the responsibility of those who tamper with God's truth on the plea of defending His character, and thus claim to be more jealous for God than the Lord Jesus Himself.

To return to the meaning of the word *aionios*, translated eternal or everlasting, expressions philologically identical: deep in it lies *æi*, meaning *always*, as Aristotle points out. *Aionios* in the LXX Greek version always represents *olam* ‡ in the Hebrew Old Testament Scriptures, the root idea of which is "mystery connected with unsearchable duration". † Seventy-six times in the Old Testament is *olam* applied to God—the Everlasting God. In the New Testament, out of about 130 occurrences of *aionios* and its cognates, where the future is obviously in view, fifteen refer to the impenitent, sixty-two to the blessedness of the righteous, and nearly forty to God Himself. Are we then to believe that heaven will only last "for an age"? or that God will only exist "till a new order of things shall come?" This is the sense of the word we are asked by these teachers to adopt for the future of the wicked. One of them lately,* with reference to the fullest phrase of all—"to the ages of the ages", which is a perfectly proper Greek equivalent for our "eternity", has written, "This expression in the Bible signifies, ninety times out of an hundred, an indefinite period of time, limited by the nature of the object in view." As the

‡ From a verb, to conceal.

† The late Dr. Handley Moule.

* *Dopo la morte* ("After Death") by Dr. A. F. Vaucher of the "Seventh-Day Adventists".

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expression occurs at most twenty-two times in the New Testament, the above is a misleading way of speaking. Of these occurrences, seventeen are in ascriptions of glory to God, or in descriptions of His Being, two of the reign of Christ and His people, and three of the fate of the lost. We must leave the author to reconcile his statement with these facts. It might help us to form a true judgment of the meaning the Spirit of God would have us attach to this type of word to quote a few more specimens of its use. Thus we have "Eternal Spirit" (Heb. 9. 14); "eternal life" (Rom. 6. 23); "eternal salvation" (Heb. 5. 9); "eternal damnation" (Mark 3. 29); "eternal glory" (1 Pet. 5. 10); "eternal God" (Rom. 16. 26); "eternal fire" (Jude 7); "eternal redemption" (Heb. 9. 12); "eternal inheritance" (Heb. 9. 15). etc. Surely if ever the meaning of a word could be determined with certainty by its use, it is that of *aionios*. But these teachers sometimes complain that, if endlessness were intended, some word other than the one we are discussing ought to have been used, which would, they say, have avoided all ambiguity. Certainly a very special word would have had to be used to escape the criticisms of conditionalists. Actually the word is the clearest and most definite in meaning that could possibly have been used: its equivalent in Luke 1. 33 being "without end" and in Heb. 7. 17 "endless" (*akalatutos*—indissoluble, perpetual). What stronger word then could be imagined? It is impossible to escape the conclusion that the word by its usage describes that which is endless. I think the inevitable conviction of any unsophisticated mind must be, that as long as God is God, and all glory is His due, so long will His redeemed enjoy their inheritance with their Redeemer, and His enemies abide consciously under His righteous judgment. No doubt the thought of endless punishment makes the mind reel and the

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heart quake, but it would be foolish for that reason to deny its possibility. We are not the best judges of the nature of sin, or of the holy requirements of God's righteousness. Nor can we know what precautions are necessary to prevent the spread of sin afresh in the universe, as He, the Omniscient and All Wise, must? All must be judged in the light of Calvary. There the love of God toward the sinner and His hatred of sin are fully revealed. Reject the atonement, and God Himself has no other way to save from an endless hell.

In what way did man differ by creation from the beasts? That there is a connection is evident; for one thing the body in either case is built up of the same chemical constituents; also, like the beasts in Gen. 1. 20, man in Gen. 2. 7, is called "a living soul", but as "all flesh is not the same flesh" so we may be sure "all souls are not the same souls". Peter recognises this by the Spirit when he records in his first epistle, that at the Flood, "eight souls were saved by water", ignoring the scores of animal souls also saved in the ark, as being of an altogether inferior and, in comparison with human beings, negligible order. Just as a relation exists between God and man as regards moral and spiritual potentialities, the latter being made in His image, though on an infinitely lower level, so between man and the beasts, there exists a relation as living organisms, though here he is far above them. But man was not evolved from the beasts; his creation being definitely separated from theirs. It was a new start. They had appeared in their swarms from sea and land by the *fiat* of the Creator; for the creation of man the Triune God calls upon Himself to operate, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." It would be blasphemous to ascribe this moral likeness to a swine or a chimpanzee. Indeed outside controversy, conditionalists would object as much as other men, to be

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likened to the beasts. "Thou madest him a little lower than the angels" was not said of any member of the brute creation.

Another contrast is that the animals came forth in their completeness; whereas the body of man was first formed, and then something happened which we never read of the lower creation, "God *breathed into his nostrils the breath of life* and man became a living soul" (Gen. 2.). The word used here for "breath" is never used of the beasts, but only of God, *e.g.*, "The *inspiration* of the Almighty" "the *breath* of the Lord" (Job 33. 8; Isa. 30. 33), and of man, *e.g.*, "the spirit of man"; "the *souls* that I have made"; "whose spirit came from Thee?" (Prov. 20. 21; Isa. 59. 16; Job 26. 4). Indeed there are passages where the possession of *n'shamah* specifically distinguishes man from the beasts. Thus in Joshua 10. 31-39: "He smote all the souls that were therein," described in verse 40 as "all that breathed (lit., had *n'shamah*) as the Lord commanded" (see Deut. 20. 16-17, where the expression refers to the nations of Canaan). But verse 14 shows that this refers exclusively to human beings, for it adds "that they did take for a spoil the cattle", which shows that these have no *n'shamah*, nor count as souls, when men are in question. Moreover, Adam appears as fitted to hold communion with his Maker, and as a morally responsible creature. How could one who "lives and moves and has his being in God" be intended by his constitution for the *ephemeral* existence of the brutes? Is then endless existence dependent on the possession of immortality? Are they synonymous terms? The conditionalist affirms so, and it is fundamental to his position; but his belief is mistaken, I submit, being based on the meaning which he attaches to "life" and "death", which I shall seek to show later is quite foreign to the Scriptures.

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Certainly man, as we have sought to prove, was created for endless existence, and this is described loosely by some as "the immortality of the soul", but the phrase is never found in the Scriptures, and the fact that man was capable of death shows that immunity from death was not his possession by original constitution. The second death is eternal existence in separation from God.

Had man been immortal by original creation, God's warning, "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" would have had no meaning. Adam was not *subject* to death before he fell, but he was *capable* of death as the event showed. "God only hath immortality" (*athanasia*) by essential constitution of being. This surely is enough to prove, what is sometimes denied, that immortality attaches to the spiritual part of man, as well as to the body, for "God is Spirit". In order to escape from this dilemma an attempt is made to limit the words of 1 Tim. 6. 16 to Christ, but it could not be said that "no man hath seen or can see" Him, whom angels and men have seen. It is God as such who is in view.* Man died spiritually, that is, became alienated from the life of God, as the *direct* result of disobedience, physically as the *indirect* result. "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin" (Rom. 5. 12). To be immune from spiritual death, the gift of eternal life must be received. This happens at conversion; "God, who is rich in mercy . . . even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together, with Christ. This same word is used of the quickening of the mortal body" (Rom. 8. 2; see also John 5. 24), which again is the equivalent of the putting on of immortality at the coming of

* The passage runs literally, which (not our Lord, but His appearing) in His times (lit., His own times, i.e. which the Father hath put in His own power), He who is the blessed and only Potentate, etc., will show.

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Christ (1 Cor. 15. 53). The immortality in this passage will mark the effect of the Lord's coming on the living saints, the incorruptibility that on the sleeping saints. The result is the same in either case. The latter word is wrongly translated immortality, etc., in 1 Tim. 1. 17; 2 Tim. 1. 10, and Rom. 2. 7. In connection with the body "incorruptible" seems a good enough translation, but when applied to God it must have the wider meaning of not liable to deterioration (see Rom. 1. 23 and 1 Tim. 1. 17). Redeemed man, too, possesses the gloriously positive blessing of Eternal Life, to issue in the endless bliss of knowing and enjoying God to the full.

Let us now consider in the light of the Scriptures the question :

WHAT IS DEATH?

This is the crux of the whole matter. Wrong here, wrong everywhere, and it is precisely here that Conditionalism is found most conspicuously wanting. It confounds death and non-existence on the one hand, and existence and life on the other.

The late Dr. Bullinger, a well-known advocate of the views combated here, replies, "The dead are the dead; they are those who have ceased to live";* but as a definition must never contain the word defined, we are not much the wiser. In his *Critical Lexicon*, however, we read under the word "live"—(*zao*) to live, not "to exist", for a thing can exist without living. And so *vice versa*, by the same showing, a thing can cease to live, and yet continue to exist. When we say that a man is dead, we do not mean that he has ceased to exist, but that he exists under new conditions. Even the body has not necessarily ceased to exist. Lazarus' body still existed in the tomb, but when the Lord called him forth, it was

* "The Rich Man and Lazarus", p. 5.

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not only the body that obeyed, but the spirit reunited to it, which had not ceased to exist either. There is no such thought in Scripture as the sleep of the soul. It is the body which, in a figurative sense, sleeps. To undertakers, grave-diggers and suchlike the body may be all, but the friends of the departed believer know he is with the Lord, and even the world, for the most part, have the thought of some kind of survival of the departed, which like the belief in the existence of God, seems an innate intuition in the heart of man of every age and race. This agrees exactly with the Bible usage, where death never means cessation of existence, but separation of existence in the case of physical death, between body and spirit, and in the case of "the second death", between the sinner and God. The first occurrence of the word in the Bible is often the key to its subsequent meaning. The word "death" is found first in the Lord's warning already referred to: "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die"* (Gen. 2. 17). To this Satan gave the lie direct, "Ye shall not surely die" (Gen. 3. 4). If Adam did not die that very day in the sense in which God used the words, then the Devil was right. But what happened? They did not lose immortality, for they had never had it; certainly they did not cease to exist, nor even die physically. Indeed no outward change seems to have taken place in them: corporeally they were the same as before, but A MARKED AND MYSTERIOUS MORAL CHANGE AT ONCE TOOK PLACE IN THEM. Their relations with their Maker were profoundly modified. Hitherto they had enjoyed unbroken communion with Him, now when

* Hebrew, lit., "To die, thou shalt die"; the idiom for emphasis, namely the Kal infinitive placed before the finite verb. The meaning conveyed by this idiomatic phrase is not at all that they would only **begin** to die the day they disobeyed, but that they would **surely die** that very day.

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they heard His voice, they were afraid, and hid themselves amongst the trees of the garden (Gen. 3. 8).

A great gulf had yawned between them and their Maker. This is spiritual death.

Physical death, though undoubtedly part of the penalty of their disobedience—"Dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return"—had to be insured in another way.

They were excluded from the tree of life, of which previously they were *allowed* freely to eat (Gen. 2. 9-16).

"Now lest he put forth his hand and take also the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever" (Gen. 3. 22), that is, prolong indefinitely his physical existence in a sin-haunted body, "therefore the Lord God sent forth the man from the garden," etc.

The way the "conditionalist" teachers juggle with this passage is truly mystifying. They do not like to say point blank that eating the tree of life would have atoned for Adam's sin, but they convey an impression that it was partly so. To quote one of them:* "This sentence might have been *to some extent* minimised and mitigated, had the wilful disobedience been followed immediately by partaking of the other tree," and lower down the same writer calls this "the dreadful goal of an age-lasting life in the state of disobedience to his Creator". How then could it be a "mitigation"? Certainly there was no virtue in the tree to affect their spiritual condition, but it was apparently just what their *bodies* needed to counter-balance the natural wear and tear of human existence: it was the true elixir of life, so long sought for since.

* "Truths, Earthly and Heavenly", May, 1930, by A. van Someron.

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The fallen ones were henceforth rigidly excluded from this source of bodily renovation, and physical death eventually supervened.

Spiritual death has characterised the whole human race from Adam to our day. To the Ephesian believers the apostle writes, "And you hath he quickened, who *were dead in trespasses and sins*" (Eph. 2. 1).

This describes their condition before conversion. They were alive man-ward, for "they walked according to the course of this world", but they were spiritually dead to God. And this was their state, when God in mercy quickened them. How clear then that "death" does not stand for non-existence, but for "wrong-existence"!

The Lord taught the same truth in John 5. 24, the believer "is passed from death into life". Of course he was existing before, but out of harmony with God, it was a state of moral death. One more example may suffice. "She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth" (1 Tim. 5. 6). She is alive but it is a butterfly existence, not worthy of the name of life. It is what God calls death. How then is it possible to admit as the conditionalists hold that death and cessation of existence are synonymous terms?

WHAT IS THE CONDITION OF THE DEAD IN THE INTERMEDIATE* STATE? To learn this we need, not only the testimony of the Old, but of the New Testament. It is true that both are equally inspired, but in the New we have a fuller revelation of life and death from Jesus Christ, "Who hath abolished death and brought life and immortality (Greek 'incorruptibility') to light through the Gospel" (2 Tim. 1. 10). The book of the Ecclesiast is a favourite book with the conditionalists, for having been written in the

* The period between death and resurrection.

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demi-obscurity of a partial revelation, they think they can prove from it their doctrine of soul-sleep or soul-extinction as some prefer. They quote from chapter 9. to show that "the dead know not anything, neither have they any more a portion for ever in anything that is done *under the sun*" (vv. 5-6). Certainly, as far as the earth goes, that is, "under the sun", the dead know nothing, and have neither further reward nor portion in it, but how does this prove that the dead have no existence? Their bodies sleep in the grave, but their spirits consciously exist in the Unseen World—Sheol or Hades.* The Old Testament distinguishes between these two conditions, "Thou wilt not leave my soul *in Hell* (Sheol—the place for departed spirits) neither wilt Thou suffer Thy Holy One to see corruption" (*i.e.* the tomb) (Psa. 16. 10). Only a few chapters on, in Ecclesiastes, we read, "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return to God who gave it" (Eccles. 12. 7). In the New Testament the same thing is taught in clearer terms. The body of the penitent thief was buried in the common grave of the executed, but his spirit was in Paradise with Christ, according to the promise. By His death and resurrection, the Lord "hath abolished death" (*i.e.* for His people) and "brought life and incorruptibility to light through the Gospel" (2 Tim. 1. 10). These are the blessings experienced in the bodies of the living and sleeping saints at Christ's coming. Again, the Apostle Paul speaks of death as of "departing to be with Christ, which is far better" (Phil. 1. 23), or of being "absent from the body, and . . . present with the Lord" (2 Cor. 5. 8). This can only describe the intermediate or unclothed state, for in resurrection the believer will in no sense be

* Hades, from two Greek words: *a*—not, *idein*—to see, the Unseen World.

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absent from the body, but in it, in a glorified condition. The conditionalists deny the possibility of conscious existence apart from the body, but the Apostle Paul evidently did not share their views, witness his description in 2 Cor. 11. 2 of his wonderful experience when caught up to Paradise; he was perfectly conscious of where he was, of what was passing around him, of the words he heard, and their sacred character, etc. Evidently, a conditionalist would assert, he must have been in his body, for otherwise, he would have known nothing of what passed. The Apostle on the contrary is at pains to assure us twice that "he could not tell whether he was in the body or out of the body". We prefer to be with Paul in his uncertainties, than with conditionalists in their assertions. All this is illustrated by our Lord when He lifts the veil of the Unseen World in the narrative of the Rich Man and Lazarus* (Luke 16.) and shows us two souls in the intermediate state, the one lost, the other safe. It is clear from this and the other passages quoted, that in the period between death and resurrection, the condition of the dead is, as we have seen earlier,

1. *A disembodied state.* Lazarus and the "rich man" had died, and had in either case no doubt received some kind of burial, but their spiritual personality survived.

2. *A state of conscious existence.* These two are no more extinct or unconscious than Abraham, but

* An attempt has been made to discredit this whole passage by saying that the Lord was adopting a tradition of the Pharisee. This is a mere *ex parte* statement, without the slightest proof or probability. Our Lord never adopted what was not true but rebuked it as a lie, and it is an insult to Him to suggest the contrary. To use a tradition which He knew was false, to crush opponents, who believed it true, would be an expedient not worthy of any straightforward worldly controversialist, much less of Him who is "the Truth".

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real and unchanged. One was comforted and the other tormented.

3. *A state of active interchange of thought.* How, we know not, but evidently distance and being apart from the body, are no impediment to this. Hades is not a place of silence, as Isa. 14. 10 shows, "All they shall *speak*," etc., and Ezek. 32. 21, "The strong among the mighty shall *speak* to him out of the midst of Sheol." No one denies that the grave is a place of silence, the body is not conscious, but it is equally evident that this does not prevent certain *spiritual* activities.

4. *A state of recognition and remembrance.* "Father Abraham, send Lazarus." "I have five brethren." "Son, remember!"

5. *An immediate state.* That is, it ensues at once on death. "The rich man died, and was buried, and being in hell, he lifted up his eyes, being in torment." "To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise."

6. *A state of blessing* for the believer: of torment for the impenitent.

7. *An irrevocable state.* "Between us and you there is a great gulf fixed."

WHAT WILL BE THE ETERNAL STATE OF THE IMPENITENT?

These teachers insist on resurrection, but what they call resurrection is really, as they deny the survival of the soul after death, the re-creation of an extinct being, with no guarantee of continuity of personality or responsibility. The Lord met the Sadducees in their denial of resurrection by showing that Jehovah's words, "I am the God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob," implied the survival of these patriarchs for "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living". To prevent all misunderstanding the Lord adds, "FOR ALL LIVE UNTO HIM" (Luke 20. 38).

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The conditionalists change this to "will live" in order to make the words refer to resurrection, but the tense is present, and the argument depends on the patriarchs existing somewhere, when Jehovah spoke to Moses.

Again in Rev. 19. 20 we learn that "the beast and the false prophet", the two human leaders of the rebel hosts in the great closing scene, will be cast alive into a lake burning with fire and brimstone. According to the older annihilationists they must at once be consumed, as any material object would, if cast into a furnace; but I believe their latest theory says something else: it will take time; every one will suffer a certain amount and endure proportionately. It is really a go-as-you-please system of doctrine, to which any teacher may add to or subtract from as may seem convenient. But could not the God who preserved Shadrach and his friends in the furnace at Babylon intervene and prevent these two wicked men from being consumed? The words, "Every one shall be salted with fire," seem to contain an ominous intimation of this. That this will be the case is proved in the next chapter of Rev. 20. 10, when the Devil will be cast into the same place as the two lost men* who will be found still existing there, and as we read of the three, "*they* shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever, a conscious, endless state, where their worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched", and I think it is only too clear that these awful personages are representative of those who have followed them, and who will share their fate. In Rev. 20. 15, it is written, "Who-

* Some Conditionalists assert that the beast and the false prophet are not men but systems. It would be strange that two systems should be cast alive into a lake of fire and be tormented there. The idea of the Devil, a real personality, being tormented with two systems is quite incongruous.

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soever was not found in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire," not to be annihilated, but to "have their part" there (Rev. 21. 8), and that according to their character and works, whether "fearful or unbelieving, or abominable or murderers, or whoremongers or sorcerers, or idolaters or liars". This fearful condition is described as "the second death"—eternal separation from God, the source of all life and good.

When we turn to the Gospels and Epistles the above testimony is borne out in many solemn passages. What is called, in order to discredit it, the "figurative", "hyperbolical" language of the Apocalyptic visions, finds its exact counterpart in the language of our Lord and His most prominent servants. Listen to John the Baptist: "He will gather His wheat into the garner, but He will burn up the chaff with fire unquenchable" (Matt. 3. 12), clearly figures in both cases; but why "unquenchable fire", if the wicked are to be consumed like literal chaff? Paul speaks of those who shall be "punished with everlasting *destruction* from the presence of the Lord". "Destruction" is from a root (*Ollumi*) signifying utter ruin, but never annihilation. The same root is used of "the marred bottles" of Mark 11. 22. Not annihilated, but spoilt for their original purpose, "the *lost* sheep of the house of Israel" (Mark 11. 22), the *lost* money of Luke 15., the *lost* men whom the Son of Man came to save (Luke 19.). They are not "annihilated", but if they refuse the seeking Saviour, their destroyed, ruined condition can only be perpetuated in the future state. Those who refused His "Come!" will hear His "Depart!" and be banished for ever from His presence. Now "banishment" conveys the thought of exclusion from blessing, rather than of extinction of being. Peter and Jude both write of certain ones "to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever". Such words

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imply a conscious experience to eyes that fain would see the light. To quote once more from John the Divine, he affirms of the one who takes the mark of the beast that he will be "tormented for ever and ever" (Rev. 14. 11). Does our Lord's teaching, then, harmonise or clash with such words?

Surely the conditionalists must at any rate find support for their views in His words! Nothing can be further from the truth. "Fear Him, which is able to *destroy* both soul and body in hell" (Matt. 10. 28), the same word as above. The lost might have become in the hand of a "God who is rich in mercy", "vessels of mercy". Alas! they have fitted themselves to be "vessels of wrath". Later, the Lord, the embodiment of love to those who repent, says He will carry out the dread sentence in person. "The Son of man shall cast them into a furnace of fire, there shall be (not extinction of being, but) weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matt. 13. 42). In another place He warns men that it is better to enter life, having one eye, hand or foot, than, having a full complement of members, be cast "where their worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched" into Hell (Gehenna) (Mark 9. 43-49). A persistent attempt is made to confuse this with Ge-Hinnom, the literal valley on the outskirts of Jerusalem, into which the "bins" of the city were emptied. If our Lord were in fact referring to a literal burning in the valley of Hinnom, His argument, as we have already seen, would lose all force or indeed be reversed.

But if our Lord was speaking of Gehenna, "the lake of fire", His argument was most convincing. It would certainly be better for a man to suffer any loss now, than keep his sin and be damned for ever in hell. The symbols are terrible, the reality infinitely more so, for it will be for always. Such are but samples of our Lord's most terrible warnings. Those

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who, under one plausible pretext or another, seek to evade these plain teachings of Scriptures, seem to claim a monopoly of love, and charge their opponents with scaring sinners away from God by setting up a fearful caricature; they claim in fact to be more jealous for God than our Lord Jesus Christ, for He was at no pains to avoid language which lends itself to what has always seemed to Christians and others to be the inevitable meaning of Scripture. But surely there is more true love shown in warning sinners, who refuse to repent, of the terrible alternative of an endless hell than in assuring them that they have nothing particular to fear beyond suffering extinction of being.

Such teachers are truly like their friends, the universalists, murderers of men's souls, and, like them, are running the terrible risk of bringing on themselves the Divine judgments pronounced on those who take away from the Scriptures. "God shall take away His part out of the tree of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book" (Rev. 22. 19).

We may leave this solemn subject with the enunciation of four principles: *first*, "Let God be true, but every man a liar"; *second*, "God is love" and "wills that all men shall be saved", so that wherever He can righteously apply to a soul the atoning blood of Christ, which cleanseth from all sin, He will; *third*, "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" *fourth*, "Flee from the wrath to come!" (Rom. 3. 4; 1 John 4. 8; 1 Tim. 2. 4; Gen. 18. 25; Matt. 2. 7).

